2.

AN ADDRESS TO THE LANDED, TRADING and FUNDED INTERESTS OF ENGLAND ON THE PRESENT STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

- - - Forſan verbis dabit ipſa fidem res
Atque - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Omnia conquaſſari in parvo tempore cernes.
LUCR.

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MDCCLXXXVI.

An ADDRESS, &c.

LIBERTY of ſpeech concerning public matters ſeems to be a general, as well as a great right of mankind: it is not only that of every individual on his own account; but of all perſons intereſted in the object of his opinion. We are united in national and other communities; by which means the ſentiments of one man relate to many: the more important alſo any ſubject, the more material and eſ-

ſential is ſuch a claim. This reaſoning however appears particularly applicable to our own ſtate; each member of which is by the Conſtitution ultimately ſuppoſed to partake in the government of his country.

The preſent time likewiſe ſeems in a peculiar manner to warrant and demand the exertion of this privilege by private perſons; when ſome of our late rulers have by their meaſures carried on againſt the almoſt unanimous ſenſe of the nation involved us in extreme misfortunes and difficulties; although it is to be hoped not in ſuch, as to exclude all remedy or conſideration. The writer nevertheleſs does not ſo much intend to expreſs his own opinions, as to propoſe certain points of general concern for the thoughts and judgement of others: he will without further apology therefore proceed to his purpoſe.

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The preſent then appears to be the great æra of taxes: a rage for taxation ſeems the diſtemper of the ſeaſon: the common cry of ſome men is taxes, taxes, taxes: nature and art are ranſacked for taxes: Adminiſtration produces and impoſes taxes: Oppoſition echoes back and calls for taxes; for numerous, extenſive and effective taxes. It may be a light alluſion on ſuch a ſerious ſubject; but we are told concerning the abundance of Mahomet's paradiſe; that if any of the bleſſed there ſhall go to lay his hands on a bunch of grapes, ten others will at the ſame moment appear and each of them cry take me; for I am better: So (give me leave to ſay) if one tax is moved for in a certain honorable aſſembly; a number of others are from different quarters immediately ſtarted and offered, as more eligible and preferable. Engliſhmen might almoſt be tempted to think, that it rains taxes in our time and coun-

if we were not very ſure the gifts and bounties of Heaven to be beſtowed with no ſuch incumbrance. The writer nevertheleſs humbly preſumes to bring this ſubject itſelf before the Public in hopes of inducing them for a moment, both the monied and the landed intereſt and governors as well as governed calmly and coolly to conſider; where ſuch a conduct is likely to end and whether it will at length not lead us into a gulph; of which the wiſeſt man neither knows nor is able to fathom or diſcover the depth.

The firſt circumſtance for our examination then ſeems to be; whether we are not by this means in the direct road and utmoſt danger of totally driving or loſing out of the kingdom the whole ſtock of our money, of our current or circulating gold and ſilver; ſo that nothing, hardly a ſingle million of pounds ſterling may remain with us to anſwer a capital

a capital debt of above two hundred and ſeventy millions ſterling attended with an annual intereſt of more than nine millions and an half; beſides all our other innumerable both public and private concerns. Such a point ſurely requires and deſerves the moſt ſerious reflection of every man official or other and of whatever deſcription; beforewe proceed headlong and blindfold towards it too far to return back; if it ſhall on conſideration appear in any degree probable or even poſſible to take place.

The quantity of this moſt neceſſary and uſeful medium paſſing or ſubſiſting among us cannot preciſely be aſcertained; although the meaſure of calling in the light gold coin afforded means to form ſome judgement of the matter. There was on that occaſion brought into the mint rather more than fifteen millions and an half of pounds ſterling

wanting weight. The whole of our currency was from thence calculated at the time to be about twenty millions *. That we may in our premiſes however be careful to keep on what ſome may call the fair ſide of the queſtion; let us take it at towards twenty-five millions, ſilver included: a few millions more or leſs will not affect the argument before us. Whatever our circulation then or now may nevertheleſs be reckoned; not one ſingle guinea or half-guinea, hardly a ſhilling or ſixpence of it has been the native produce of Great Britain: every part and piece was dug out of diſtant mines or found in foreign regions: it all arrived here over many latitudes of ſea or land and through numberleſs paſſages and exchanges: it is therefore likewiſe equally liable to be carried away.

* Mr. Eden's Letters, p. 214. I have ſeen ſome very good opinions that confirm me in eſtimating the current coin of the kingdom at 20 millions ſterling.

We perceive with our ſenſes the waters of the ſea to paſs up the Thames, the Humber and the Severn and to revert again according to the rules of nature: the courſe and current of money among men are indeed more removed from common ſight; but they notwithſtanding obey with the ſame certainty their proper laws and ſo ſurely as our riches came in with the tide, will they return back with the ebb; if the due cauſes ſhall act towards that end.

Let us then conſider how far the Specie now poſſeſſed by us may be truly eſteemed and depended on, as our own. We owe (as has been obſerved) at home and abroad between two hundred and ſeventy and two hundred and eighty millions, an enormous ſum; the groſs account of which however does not concern my preſent purpoſe, but only that part of it belonging to the inhabitants

of other countries. What ſhare of the Whole this may be, is to no degree of exactneſs known: It is commonly eſtimated at a Fourth: That would almoſt amount to ſeventy millions and be much more than double or nearly treble of our whole internal circulation; but (whatever it may within any probability or according to different opinions be reckoned) it certainly ſurpaſſes by a very great number of millions the total of the money now current in the kingdom. What ſort of property therefore have we in this moſt important object and by how many means may it be drawn from us?

That is nevertheleſs not the whole of the matter. We had at the Revolution no national debt, hardly of a doit, either domeſtic or external: it has intirely been ſince incurred: we had then likewiſe a ſtock of circulating caſh or coin; which was undoubtedly very conſiderable; although it may at preſent be no object

of

of calculation. The nation therefore taken in its univerſal capacity has in the period between that time and the preſent run out, expended upon the whole above its income ſo much; as this foreign debt exceeds the quantity of coined gold and ſilver now current among us; beſides what money we poſſeſſed at the acceſſion of King William: Whatever the ſuppoſed balance of our trade may during that interval have brought in; whatever our dependent dominions have remitted to us, as the parent country or ſeat of Empire; all is gone with the reſt, is ſquandered or conſumed. If other things therefore had kept their actual courſe; we ſhould without ſuch temporary ſupplies received from foreign nations by ſubſcriptions to our loans or purchaſes into our funds not only now be, but have long ago been without a ſingle guinea or ſhilling in the Iſland. This is ſurely a moſt ſtriking circumſtance and

too

too plainly proves the poſſibility or probability; that we may one day be almoſt totally deprived of our ſpecie: I add with ſincere concern likewiſe; that it as certainly and evidently follows from the preceding obſervations, as the cleareſt mathematical or numerical demonſtration from its proper principles.

We have during theſe years indeed laviſhed almoſt infinite ſums in our various wars; but are pride and ambition then departed from among men or is all war at an end and have nations ſheathed the ſword in perpetual peace? Do no clouds appear in the political hemiſphere; which may break into ſtorms and affect us, if not of neceſſity yet by our own imprudence? The time paſt is the beſt example for that to come. The writer enters into no particulars on this ſubject; but has conſidered the matter on the whole and leaves it in the

the ſame manner for the reflection of the reader.

In this ſituation then we now ſtand: let us next turn our view towards the proſpect before us. It muſt on that ſubject particularly occur; that ſo great a capital due to ſtrangers will neceſſarily require a very large and proportionable intereſt to be paid abroad. Here however we are again under the like uncertainty concerning the exact quantity, as we were before with reſpect to that of the principal; on which this depends. A Fourth of our whole intereſt would be about two millions four hundred thouſand pounds; but whether it is more or leſs; we have no means wherewith to find or furniſh it, except the ſurplus of our trade including our intercourſe with the other parts or connections of the Britiſh Empire. Let us then conſider the ſtate and condition of this

this reſource itſelf; which is to ſupply ſuch a perpetual iſſue of treaſure; whatever it may be.

What cauſe therefore produces a favorable balance in commerce? Evidently the ſelling better commodities than other nations at the ſame price or equally good at a lower: this appears plain; but can it be the caſe of our own country? We are more highly and heavily taxed; than ever was any other kingdom or ſtate, ſince men firſt formed themſelves into national communities: The deſtructive art and practice of raiſing money by that means have with us been carried to a pitch and extent unknown before to adminiſtrations or governments: We leave far behind us the whole world on that ſubject. The tradeſman or mechanic, the peaſant or labourer nevertheleſs cannot from his hard earnings ſpare all theſe payments and expence;

pences: he could in that caſe not maintain himſelf and family: he muſt waſte away in want or emigrate to ſome other country and leave a gap in his place. Such burthens do in the firſt inſtance and (as it were) in their paſſage without doubt preſs and bear exceedingly hard on the immediate and helpleſs objects of them; but they muſt beſides in ſome ſhapes or other, in a direct or indirect manner be ultimately and probably in an increaſed degree laid on our commodities, our manufactures and productions themſelves: Theſe will go clogged and incumbered with them both to domeſtic and diſtant markets: They will in particular paſs abroad through a compariſon and competition of cheapneſs with the merchandize of other nations.

Each climate and country has undoubtedly its peculiar advantages and diſadvantages reſpecting trade: Providence

dence and nature have (as it were) portioned out and divided their bounties among men. How very variouſly are wool and ſilk, flax and cotton, wine and oil, gold, ſilver and iron, ports, havens and navigable rivers together with innumerable other objects of exchange or means of intercourſe among mankind diſtributed over our globe? No place or people nevertheleſs ſeem ſo eſpecially favored; but that their beſt bleſſings are liable to be loſt or deſtroyed by their own imprudence and operations. What avail even the gifts of Heaven againſt weak governments and ill-judged meaſures of ſtate or commerce? How effectually will diſcouragements, impediments, incumbrances and particularly thoſe of high duties dry up or turn into different channels the moſt valuable ſources or means of riches? England certainly is by its inſular ſituation and on other accounts very advantageouſly circum-

circumſtanced with regard to domeſtic and foreign trafic: Let us however caſt our eyes beyond our own ſhores. The nations neareſt neighbours to us on the oppoſite continent are two very differently conſtituted ſtates, the abſolute monarchy of France and the free Republic of Holland; but do both or either of them watch their coaſts and guard the ſeas againſt us or we againſt them and how ſhall we then rival their trade in diſtant countries; when we are obliged to employ armies and navies and wage a perpetual civil war among ourſelves to prevent their interfering with us in our Iſland and at our own homes; which nevertheleſs we are after all hardly able to compaſs? Such is however the ſtate of our trade; the balance of which is to ſupply millions a year for ſatisfying the foreign intereſt of our funds and to ſave us from the danger of being left with our immenſe debt and nothing to diſcharge it. The

The writer is ſenſible; that the idea of the pecuniary profits ariſing from our trafic abroad is in diſcourſe and writing ſometimes carried to an extravagant height; but cauſes may be diſcerned and judged by their conſequences: theſe muſt bear ſome proportion to each other. Two millions will hardly be deemed an over-valuation for the ſhare of other nations in the annual intereſt of our funds: had that ſum however been from the Revolution yearly gained by our trade; it would now amount to nearly two hundred millions ſterling or from the acceſſion of George the Firſt to more than an hundred and twenty; but when have any ſigns of the like effects ever ſhown themſelves among us or under what napkin have been hidden theſe vaſt heaps of gold and ſilver and where is the compariſon or correſpondence between ſuch ſuppoſitions and our twenty-five millions at the

period

period of calling in the light coin? Our monſtrous loans and the perpetual purchaſes from abroad made into our Stocks will duly conſidered abundantly explain all other appearances or conceptions of our endleſs riches and treaſure.

Theſe circumſtances therefore of our foreign debt ſo far exceeding our domeſtic ſtock of coin, of our national outgoings having of late years prodigiouſly ſurpaſſed our total income, of our great and exhauſting remittances annually made and making to other countries and of the burthened and incumbered ſtate of our trade cannot of themſelves but excite in every conſiderate man ſtrong apprehenſions concerning our condition with reſpect to our money, our circulating gold and ſilver: It is nevertheleſs moſt earneſtly to be wiſhed, that we could ſtop here; that this point only continued a matter of reaſon and ſpecu-

lation nor appeared to be already taking place and to have begun its operation; but do we at this time perceive no plain proof of its effect ſubject to our immediate obſervation and experience? I mean the general want and ſcarcity of money now every where common among us. It obtains in our metropolis, our cities, towns and country: It is not an idle and groundleſs clamour or complaint, but truly founded in diſtreſs and difficulty: I will not ſay, what may be the caſe of ſome few; who live in a perpetual round either of grandeur or diſſipation; but no one acquainted with the true ſtate of thoſe about him can poſſibly be inſenſible of it: The caſe is real and univerſal. When the waters of the ſea recede from one quarter; they increaſe elſewhere: If any place or portion of a country ſuffers a partial deprivation of caſh; this muſt of courſe become more plentiful and abundant in another;

Taxes

Taxes certainly cauſe ſome ſtagnation; but even theſe in time circulate again; if they are none of them ſent abroad, but all repaid to the ſubject and inhabitant; from whence they were taken: A general want can only be the effect of a general deficiency.

Such a circumſtance then ſurely demands the earneſt attention of every Engliſhman; who has the leaſt concern for himſelf or his country. It muſt affect the welfare of all from the higheſt to the loweſt, from the prince or duke to the peaſant and mechanic. We may moreover not have much time to throw away: the ſtone haſtens, as it comes to the ground: Theſe cauſes continue or increaſe and will in future perhaps proceed with great rapidity: The ſame quantity taken from a ſmaller produces more perceptible effects than from a larger ſtore of treaſure: The more reduced our con-

dition the more in proportion will ſuch circumſtances operate.

Our Stocks indeed riſe; but ſo does the buyer likewiſe yet obtain an extraordinary intereſt: They lately afforded more than five and now give above four and a half per cent.* A private man punctual in his dealings can extend his credit almoſt to any degree; but how much more may then a great nation? We have ever kept time in our public payments. Would it on theſe accounts therefore be any wonder; if a chief part of the looſe wealth throughout Europe was flung into our funds? Borrowing however is without exception the worſt trade in the world: It immediately increaſes our intereſt and will ultimately enhance our ruin; but the ſtriking circumſtance in the caſe is; that the general plenty of money does by no means

* Four per Cents. are at 88 whilſt this is writing.

keep

keep pace with this ſtart of our ſtocks: Whatever was the cauſe of ſuch a riſe; it appears to be abſorbed and loſt in the univerſal ſcarcity.

It is likewiſe ſaid; that our taxes produce and our treaſury abounds nor are theſe things to be admired at, ſurrounded and incloſed as we are on all ſides with duties. The hand of the tax-gatherer is the ſtrongeſt: His demand muſt be diſcharged, while it can be collected: the landlord, the parochial officer and the perſonal creditor muſt be contented to come after; each according to his reſpective power and ſituation. When the taxes themſelves ſhall at laſt fail and be deficient; all is over beyond remedy or recovery: Nothing will then be left for us but to abide the utmoſt extremity of our fate; whatever it ſhall be.

Here then however ſeems to offer itſelf a moſt important point. It will perhaps be ſaid; that we need not ſcrupulouſly to conſider the ſubject before us nor nicely examine the weight of every reaſon on each ſide; for that the abſolute poverty and beggary of Great Britain (in its preſent ſituation eſpecially) would be ſo extraordinary a circumſtance; that the leaſt likelihood of it only is fully ſufficient to give any alarm and to awaken our moſt earneſt attention: Probability in a caſe of this kind (as it were) takes the place of certainty. What are therefore the conſequences to be reaſonably feared or expected from ſuch an event? In anſwer to which however the writer begs in his turn permiſſion to aſk; who or where is the man wiſe enough to reſolve in any degree that queſtion?

We

We are told and with undoubted truth in its intended ſenſe; that there is nothing new under the ſun; but Solomon in ſaying this never dreamt; that any nation would borrow above two hundred and ſeventy millions of ſterling money. What was all the gold found by him in Ophir compared with that prodigious ſum? The debt of Great Britain is a new thing under the ſun and happy may it be for mankind never to know another inſtance of the ſort.

There is therefore no precedent or example in the hiſtory of the world; whereby to judge of what would happen in the caſe ſuppoſed. Men no doubt lived in former times comfortably and happily, undertook and performed conſiderable expeditions, the celebrated one of Greece againſt Troy and others before the invention and without the uſe of money; that is to ſay, of gold or ſilver ſtamped

and current by a mark; but theſe precious metals were not then become by cuſtom the medium or means of all our dealings with one another, of all our uſes, pleaſures, purſuits or neceſſities: Private perſons had not heavy taxes nor public communities large intereſt to pay. We are told of the hardſhip to make bricks without ſtraw in ancient days; when that material was neceſſary for ſuch a manufacture; but what will be the taſk to find and furniſh annually between nine and ten millions of our money for the intereſt of our funds or perhaps fourteen and more for our annual expenditure; without guineas or ſhillings, the ſpecies or the parts whereof pounds ſterling are compoſed?

There can in ſuch a ſituation apparently be no markets, no buying and ſelling: Every man will be racking, rending and ſcrambling for his own imme-

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diate ſubſiſtance: The hand of the creditor will be upon the debtor and that of the debtor againſt the creditor: The landlord will bear hard upon his tenant and the tenant withſtand his landlord: The monied intereſt will contend with the landed and the landed with the monied: Our taxes muſt be returned in arrears: Our debt will become a monſtrous capital without an intereſt: We ſhall neither be able to pay our navies, our armies, our civil liſt or even (if ſuch a light obſervation ſuits this ſerious ſubject) the places and penſions; of which ſome men ſeem ſo greedy and deſirous and that have aſſuredly had no ſmall ſhare in producing the calamities approaching or menacing us: We may inſtead of being prepared to reſiſt a foreign enemy have perhaps our own ſwords at one another's throats. It is ſaid; that during a great famine throughout our Eaſt-Indian territories the native

tive inhabitants of Calcutta and its neighbourhood were ſeen by numbers patiently expiring in the ſtreets and high roads; but who knows what might be the caſe with the citizens of London; if that immenſe multitude ſhould one day be ready to devour one another? May Heaven however preſerve us from the effects of ſuch a ſituation in our capital!

The miſchief in queſtion nevertheleſs would not reſt at home. The reins of government over our foreign dominions or connections muſt of neceſſity fall from our hands: The exigency of the caſe would force Ireland willingly or unwillingly (and whatever riſque ſhe might run or danger incur) to undertake the ſeparate conduct of her own public affairs: Our Weſt-Indian Iſlands would be driven to ſhift, as they might: Our remaining poſſeſſions on the continent of America would perhaps find no difficulty to procure another protection.

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If the body ſhould be convulſed at home would the arm be ſtrong enough to retain our very diſtant dominions of the Eaſt-Indies? May not in ſuch a caſe even Scotland cut the links of the chain now uniting us? Might ſhe not ſay; we moſt earneſtly wiſh to ſave or aſſiſt our Siſter of England; but what will it avail or where would be the benefit for us only to ſink into the ſame bottomleſs abyſs along with them? Good and gracious Heaven, what would be the condition of this once fortunate and flouriſhing country thus left alone with a debt of near two hundred and eighty millions ſterling and no means or power to anſwer either the capital or the intereſt!

Shall therefore the writer here hold his hand and do we fear to look towards the events; which we have long been uſing our utmoſt endeavours to bring upon ourſelves? Let us however not

run

run blindfold upon our fate; for how can any people hope to prevent or avoid the evils; which they dare not or will not conſider? Where ſuch a conjuncture then would ultimately end; who can judge or gueſs? Nature however ſeems to include in itſelf the means to remedy its own diſorders. When cauſes too ſtrong to ſubſiſt are collected within the bowels of our globe; they do not continue in an undue ſtate there, but diſcharge themſelves by convulſions, by volcanos and earthquakes: When our atmoſphere is overloaded with corrupt or combuſtible matter; it is reſtored by ſtorms and tempeſts: If the air is any where wanting to a proper diſtribution; that element fills the vacuity with violence.

Theſe laws and operations promote the general Good: So likewiſe is it in the affairs of men, of ſtates and kingdoms. Who knows, whether this fine

Iſland

Iſland might long be ſuffered to remain only a ſcene of diſtreſs and miſery? How many changes have already happened and been experienced here? The Romans conquered Britain and brought with them arts, ſciences and the other human improvements of thoſe times: Their departure left our country in ſome meaſure deſerted and helpleſs; when the Danes and Saxons repleniſhed and ſtrengthened it with new inhabitants: The Normans likewiſe added to our numbers and introduced a brave people; who being mixed with the Engliſh have ſince become a great and glorious nation. Theſe events have on the whole contributed to the benefit of our ſpecies and the advancement of our native country: Should however our time likewiſe be in its turn worn out; ſhould we have ſown and nouriſhed the ſeeds of our own deſtruction; have planted with thorns and briars, overloaded with debts

and

and taxes this portion of the earth allotted in the bounty of Providence for our habitation; who can say; what further revolutions or alterations may or may not await us?

Opportunity however begets events. The ſtate of Holland is now perhaps weak compared with the power of Great Britain; but is it nevertheleſs abſolutely impoſſible; that the Dutch ſo exceedingly our creditors ſhould in a time of total diſorder and diſtraction come one day and demand our lands and poſſeſſions, our country itſelf in diſcharge of the debts due and unpaid to them or that ſome other neighbours or nations might in ſuch a conjuncture preſs hard upon us? May Dover never become a compenſation for Calais or Portſmouth for Gibraltar? Who can ſo far look into fate and futurity as to foretell the utmoſt end and conſequences

of

of certain cauſes now exiſting in our ſtate; unleſs they ſhall be obviated and prevented in due time and by the proper means? Enough however has been ſaid on this head: Let us drop the curtain on a ſubject; of which the writer cannot diſcourſe or conſider without the greateſt awe and concern.

May Heaven then avert from us all theſe evils, whether the heavieſt or the lighteſt; but that high and juſt power appears to help or ſupport only thoſe, who aſſiſt themſelves: It is through our own good conduct, our own prudence and diſcretion, that we muſt in this exigency hope or expect to be preſerved. Of what ſort then is the remedy and which are the means (it may be aſked) that can ſave or extricate us from ſo many and extreme ſurrounding difficulties or to what end are otherwiſe ſuch ideas and imaginations ſcattered? But does

does the paſſenger of a ſhip not perfectly perform his part; if he points towards the rock, on which the veſſel is running and ready to be wrecked with all its ſails ſet; although to ſteer and direct is the office of others? Muſt not any man have unpardonably neglected his duty both to himſelf and his country; who ſeeing theſe things in the ſame light with the writer had not repreſented them to the Public for their conſideration; with whom and thoſe ruling over us the reſult muſt ultimately reſt? The writer nevertheleſs does on ſo eſſential an occaſion of the community not deſire to turn aſide nor will ſcruple with all ſubmiſſion to offer his very ſmall mite on the altar of the general ſafety: A time may come, when the maturity of circumſtances will make ſalutary counſels ſought after; whether or no that ſeaſon is now fully advanced.

We

We are as yet at leaſt then not totally annihilated: The ſun continues to ſhine on our heads: The ſwords of our enemies are not at our throats nor their bayonets at our breaſts: We poſſeſs in peace and plenty a beautiful and fertile Iſland: Our nation conſiſts of many millions of men: *Salus populi eſt ſuprema lex:* Their preſervation is among the higheſt of objects and is underſtood to confer upon us the rights neceſſary for that purpoſe. Is there within the bounds and compaſs of nature therefore no means for us to avoid ruin; if we are not wanting to ourſelves; but do we deſerve that benefit; if we are or what can we further pray for than to have our fate placed in our own hands?

The firſt meaſure then, which the writer preſumes to propoſe, is a moſt beaten and hackneyd topic: He will for that reaſon only throw it out and dwell on

it the leſs nor does at all intend to conſider it as any conſtitutional claim or on the ground of rectitude, but merely as a matter of neceſſity and utility in our circumſtances at this time: He means however a general, equal and real repreſentation of the Commons, the People, the Public in Parliament. The writer highly reſpects and honors the elective part of our legiſlature in its preſent form; but humanity hardly admits of perfection: It only moves towards that point by degrees and improvements. Does then any body of men now ſubſiſting among us poſſeſs (I don't ſay or mean the legal right to govern or to ſhare in the government of our country) but the weight, authority, influence (or whatever it may be called) to reconcile and unite on a great, univerſal, difficult and complicated occaſion all the various, interfering intereſts of individuals and to direct them with intire harmony and

unanimity

unanimity towards the center only of the public Good? Such a combination of powers, qualities or requiſites is ſeldom found among men; but it is nevertheleſs abſolutely neceſſary for the moſt important and momentous purpoſe at this time under our conſideration and may be hoped for and expected in a repreſentation of the ſort before deſcribed. Like cauſes muſt perpetually produce like effects. We have in our preſent ſtate been from a free condition encumbered with an infinite debt: Can then a continuation of the ſame caſe be the right means to extricate and reſtore us or muſt it be more fit to involve us further; if our actual condition admits of that circumſtance? Here I will therefore leave this matter.

Suppoſing us then thus provided with the utmoſt wiſdom and integrity in council united to the extreme authority

over the whole community and all the ſeparate parts of it; there will next be required to anſwer the exigences and difficulties before ſuggeſted the greateſt poſſible ſtrength for execution accompanied with the ſmalleſt expence; but where can we look for the compleat conjunction of theſe circumſtances, except in an univerſal, national militia; I mean in one officered, armed, trained, marſhalled, maintained by ourſelves, diſtinguiſhed only by their common dreſs together with ſome ſlight regimental mark and conſiſting of all the ſenſible men of the kingdom; who ſhould voluntarily offer to take part in ſuch an admirable and deſirable eſtabliſhment; a meaſure intirely concurring and coincident with the preceding one of a general repreſentation. This Iſland might perhaps afford and furniſh near a million of ſuch ſoldiers. What a power would here be! Prepared and provided in this manner

we might withſtand a combination of the world; although our neighbouring ſeas and ports were laid open. Such a body would at the ſame time not be deſirous of diſplaying their knight-errantry abroad nor enable or encourage ambitious men to act that wild and deſtructive part. Fortunate the nation, happy the people who ſhall be ſo ſecured and defended! The expences would likewiſe be comparatively moderate. Every man would (as it were) go from his own abode, his houſe, his ſhop to the place of exerciſe and that being over return thither again. Such an inſtitution would beſides inſure domeſtic peace, order and good government; for theſe bleſſings are both the true intereſt and the real deſire of the Public, of the many and multitude; but it is the diſtreſs and deſperation of a few low or the rapaciouſneſs and ambition of a few high men, which ſo much diſturb and diſquiet the

reſt of mankind. The volunteers of Ireland are a pregnant proof on this ſubject: Never were the laws of that country ſo duly and regularly executed, as by their means. They have on this head done a credit to themſelves, to their country, to their inſtitution and to the principles of liberty; on which they were eſtabliſhed.

Why however ſhould we then doubt as much of our own countrymen of England? A due encouragement of government might ſoon raiſe numerous armies on theſe grounds; who would prove an invincible defence for the throne of the prince; that ſo favored and confided in them. How little nevertheleſs are ſome ſtations of men made acquainted with their true intereſt, being commonly inſtructed to look with jealouſy on all, except on a few ſurrounding ſycophants and flatterers; who are perhaps the very perſons of whoſe ſelfiſh

and

and deſigning counſels they have the moſt real reaſon to beware!

Should at a time of general diſtraction and confuſion a foreign enemy land in our Iſland; what a tempting prize for a rapacious plunderer or a vain-glorious conqueror would the city of London be with all its prodigious extent and neighbourhood? It is ſituated not far from our coaſt: Its immenſe multitude would be its weakneſs: Theſe would be as helpleſs and defenceleſs, as a flock of ſheep conſiſting of the ſame number; I mean in their preſent ſtate; but let them be armed and prepared according to the plan propoſed; when they would become a ſecurity and protection for themſelves, for the royal perſon and family and the whole kingdom. May ſuch a day of trial never be ſeen or known; but the misfortunes following upon it will be our own fault; if it

ſhould and if this almoſt ſure means of ſelf-defence ſhall have been neglected. Thus however ſhould we unite wiſdom, integrity, authority and ſtrength: Have reaſon to fear neither foreign foes or domeſtic diſturbances; but our country be able to ſupport itſelf againſt all probable or under Heaven almoſt poſſible dangers or events of violence.

Our circumſtances nevertheleſs demand yet other and further meaſures to provide for the permanent proſperity, the perpetual abundance, plenty and wealth of our Iſland; but which might ſurely and ſafely be referred to theſe ſalutary and excellent inſtitutions: The writer however having proceeded ſo far will likewiſe make bold to mention what the nature and ſtate of things appear in his poor opinion more particularly to point out and require on that ſubject.

Proper

Proper and effectual means certainly are moſt neceſſary to be purſued reſpecting the balance of our trade and to prevent the ebb or outgoing of our treaſure, wherewith we are threatened; but which it is abſolutely and unavoidably incumbent upon us to provide againſt. The propoſition of the writer for this purpoſe therefore is to make Great Britain one total, intire, free port with full and perfect liberty of exportation and importation, without exception, without reſtriction, without cuſtom-houſe duties on one hand or drawbacks or bounties on the other; to extend likewiſe the ſame privilege and indulgence to all our different, dependent dominions; to our ſettlements in Africa, to the province of Canada and our Weſt-Indian Iſlands together with every other part or place now belonging to us and not confined by excluſive grants or charters; as likewiſe to endeavour by our example and

pre-

precedent to lead Ireland into the ſame meaſure; on whoſe ſide however we ſhould in this caſe probably find not the leaſt difficulty or heſitation. Such is then the plan preſumed to be thrown out for general conſideration.

Our preſent ſyſtem is in a manner compoſed of inconſiſtencies, of contradictory regulations, of duties and drawbacks, obſtacles and encouragements, impoſitions and allowances, prohibitions and monopolies, every one of them mutually claſhing with each other, but all concurring to the univerſal detriment and diſadvantage of the whole: Whereas in the caſe mentioned commerce would take its natural courſe and find its readieſt vent; every means and opportunity of trade would be open; our intercourſe with other nations and that of other nations with us be increaſed; our navigation be delivered from numberleſs in-

incumbrances and impediments; our country probably become the warehouſe of the world and our merchants be employed as the common carriers for the reſt of mankind.

How would likewiſe our colonies, ſettlements or provinces be enriched and pour their treaſures into England, as (I ſay) the mother country and place of Empire? While we ſhall ſo remain; we muſt for our own circle of government be the center of arts, ſciences, improvement and preferment; of pleaſure, profit and ambition; which circumſtances and others of the ſame ſort will irreſiſtibly draw hither the inhabitants and with them the riches, gold, ſilver and produce of our dependencies or connections. The proprietors themſelves would with the propoſed liberty willingly and ſpontaneouſly bring or ſend to us in a moſt abundant manner thoſe valuable objects, inſtead

ſtead of a ſmall part of them being ſnatched through reſtraints, murmurs and diſcontents by the diſguſting hand of the tax-gatherer. Such is the regular and conſtant courſe of nature: The trade winds do not more ſurely blow from their reſpective points nor rivers run into the ocean or the needle tend towards the pole; than theſe other circumſtances happen and take place in their due order. We obſerve the former by experience and learn the rules of them from reaſon; but theſe latter proceed from human paſſions and inclinations, from motives and principles paſſing in our own breaſts: We feel the cauſes within ourſelves, as well as ſee the conſequences without. There is therefore no ground to doubt of the event; provided we will purſue the proper means to produce ſuch moſt deſireable and beneficial effects.

If

If Saint Euſtatia with every other place comparatively inſignificant of itſelf does ſo proſper and flouriſh and return ſuch profits to its principals by a free trade; what might with that advantage be expected from our own many fine Iſlands and eſpecially from Jamaica ſituated, as it is with reſpect to the gulph of Mexico and the Spaniſh Main. One hundred and thirty years have now paſſed ſince our conqueſt of this valuable poſſeſſion; but what moſt plentiful ſtreams of treaſure would during that period have flowed and rolled (as it were) from thence into our country; if the inhabitants thereof had themſelves been allowed the liberty to acquire it. Some of theſe iſlands nevertheleſs are now ſaid grievouſly to complain of the reſtraints laid upon their intercourſe with the American continent: Let us then particularly beware of driving or inducing them to look towards that example; in

which

which caſe it will be but a poor remedy or reſource for us only to exclaim againſt rebellion and ingratitude; when we might by a due indulgence advantageous to ourſelves, as well as to them have foreſtalled the evil.

If the prudent policy here recommended had prevailed before the laſt war; I ſay; if Great Britain, Ireland, the almoſt immenſe continent of North America then belonging to us, our Weſt-Indian Iſlands, our African Settlements, our Eaſt-Indian territories, our South-Sea pretentions together with the reſt of our Empire, connections or dependencies had all enjoyed a perfectly free trafic both among themſelves and with every other nation; for what a large part muſt we have ſhared in the trade, navigation, power and riches of the whole world; in thoſe great purſuits of human intereſt and ambition? How does the very

very idea ſtrike and flatter the imagination of an Engliſhman? That time however is now no more: Let us therefore turn our backs on ſo mortifying a remembrance and reflection; but let us nevertheleſs purſue the ſame object and proceed towards that point ſo far, as we are able: Much yet remains within our reach and command; if we ſhall not be deficient to ourſelves; although the occaſion is perhaps preſſing and urgent.

This meaſure will likewiſe immediately put an end to ſmuggling by an inſtant effect; as the light of the ſun drives away darkneſs. It will convert the contraband trader into a fair and lawful merchant. This point is ſo evident in itſelf as to allow no room for argument or enlargement on the ſubject.

Where

Where will then be (ſome men may aſk) our Act of navigation; that bulwark, that Palladium or by whatever big word it may be called? The writer is with reſpect to this topic fully ſenſible of his difficulties both from popular prejudices inſtilled into the Public by intereſted perſons on the ſubject and likewiſe as it is from certain incidents become at preſent a ſort of watch-word of party; when there is no need to ſay; how hard it may be for reaſon or argument, much better perhaps than thoſe of the writer to make themſelves heard: He will however preſume to continue on the occaſion the ſame liberty of ſpeech hitherto uſed by him. I am then bold to ſay; that the beſt, infinitely the beſt act of navigation will be one for a free and open trade, for ſuch an one, as is before ſpoken of and deſcribed: A law of that ſort would for the public benefit be perhaps ſurpaſſed or equalled by few; by very

very few indeed of all contained in the numberleſs volumes of our immenſe books of ſtatutes.

The hiſtory of this in queſtion is; that Mr. Oliver Saint John a proud and active republican in the times of Charles the Firſt went Embaſſador to Holland on a ſtrange, chimerical conceit or project of uniting and conſolidating together the two Commonwealths, the new one of England and their old one of the Seven Provinces; but not receiving there the reſpect required by him he returned home out of humor and from revenge and reſentment carried by his weight in the Houſe of Commons the Act now under our conſideration; the firſt fruits of which were a moſt violent, naval war between the two nations, the moſt ſo perhaps of any ever yet known on the ſcene of the world: Several pitched battles (if they may be ſo expreſſed) were during

the ſhort time of it fought at ſea for whole days and more than one for ſeveral days together; when they were at length diſcontinued only by the mutual inability of the combatants to maintain them longer. Such were the auſpicious riſe and beginning of this celebrated ſyſtem or ſtatute; that ſeems founded on two inconſiſtent, contradictory and (I had almoſt ſaid) abſurd principles; one of which is to enrich the mother country by reſtraining our colonies and the other to encreaſe our ſeamen and ſtrengthen our navy by confining and cramping the commerce of Great Britain.

It never was this cauſe or our preſent, narrow and ill-judged policy; which made us the naval power, that we now are and have for very many ages been, but our ſituation of a large iſland placed in a moſt commodious part of the globe

and

and many other concurrent circumſtances; which have never failed us; when our own counſels and conduct correſponded with the bounties of nature. Where was the Act of Navigation; when before the conqueſt Alfred was maſter of the ſurrounding ſeas or afterwards that Edward the Third commanded and glorioufly ſignalized himſelf in the channel or when our nation during the reign of Queen Elizabeth were ſo highly diſtinguiſhed on the ſame element in various quarters of the world? Whence came all the great preeminences and prerogatives of our Cinque Ports; alas now how changed and on how different accounts continued, from what they were originally granted! When or on what grounds did the proud compliment of the flag receive its origin and would our Act of Navigation procure it for us; if it was to be at preſent begun or eſtabliſhed? It was

juſt on the moment of this Act being paſſed and in the war already ſaid to have happened on account of it; that our countrymen obliged Holland to buy peace with a large ſum of money, to acknowledge the ſuperiority of their Republican flag and to diſclaim the cauſe of the Stuarts; but what protection did on the contrary this palladium prove; when there had during a courſe of ſeventeen years been time and ſcope for its operation good or bad and when the ſame Dutch in the year ſixteen hundred and ſixty-ſeven took Sheerneſs, deſtroyed the fortifications and a conſiderable quantity of ſtores collected there, ſailed up the Medway, broke a boom laid acroſs that river for an obſtacle in their way and burnt our men of war and merchants ſhips at Chatham; which ſome hiſtorians reckon for one of the moſt mortifying affronts ever received by our nation. There were times after the

Revo-

Revolution; that the fleets of France conteſted the ſeas with thoſe of England: When the Earl of Chatham indeed directed at our helm; he made through our navy his great conqueſts and acquiſitions; not however by means of this act of navigation; but of his ability and capacity: In the ſucceeding (I mean) the laſt war again when we were on the contrary over-matched in wiſdom and policy and conſequently in ſtrength and power; was not every thing reverſed; how many moſt valuable poſſeſſions did we in our turn loſe abroad and was Plymouth never threatened or the channel commanded by our enemies at home? When was our empire of the ocean more doubtful than at the preſent period; that the Act of Navigation is ſo highly ſounded and the authors of our condition and of its attendant circumſtances join in the cry? Will not our poſterity have great reaſon to think themſelves happy;

if they ſhall receive from us the ſame naval ſuperiority, as our anceſtors delivered down to thoſe after them; long before this Act of Navigation had ever been heard or thought of?

The Seven United Provinces of Holland are for the ſize and extent of their territory perhaps the firſt maritime and commercial people ever known in the world: They alſo love themſelves like other men; but have they nevertheleſs or do they deſire any ſuch edict of navigation? No: Give me however leave to ſay what they have and what they do deſire: They approach nearer to a free-port trade, than any other ſtate whatſoever; a chief and fundamental cauſe of their proſperity, of their commerce, navigation, riches and power and proceeding from a much better and wiſer principle than any cobbled and patched-work jumble. Their country perhaps produces

duces the leaſt bread-corn for the number of its inhabitants of any in Europe; but they are nevertheleſs to their own great benefit, as well as the common comfort of mankind particularly inſtrumental in preventing the famine or want of other nations. It is the like caſe with them on every occaſion of the kind. A free importation and free exportation mutually help and contribute to one another. The univerſal law of nature is as wiſe and powerful, as an act of Parliament; but which encourages or warrants no ſuch ſelfiſh ſyſtem either in our general conduct or particularly with reſpect to trade and commerce; whoſe very object is a mutual exchange among mankind of the various wares, commodities and merchandize produced in the different parts of our globe and which cannot duly flouriſh under the influence of any means

directly counteracting this their eſſential ſpirit and principle. Let our buying and ſelling be unreſtrained and our taxes moderate: Let us lay aſide the oppreſſive and impolitic and (I could perhaps add) the unjuſt and illegal practice of preſſing our ſeamen; when we need not doubt to have a full trafic and abundant numbers of thoſe brave and meritorious men to defend on any occaſion their country and to annoy its enemies.

What will in ſuch a caſe then (it may further be demanded) become of our joint-ſtock and excluſive companies; whom all the (as it were) infinite number and immenſe extent of their territories confined to themſelves will not preſerve from decay; if the private merchant ſhall be ſuffered to fetch at pleaſure his wares and commodities from other parts, than the places of their original production; but need the writer

ſcruple

ſcruple to reply; that ſo much the better? Is not it at once both a favourable ſign and a good effect of the freedom here recommended; if it will thus contribute towards opening of our trade to the Public, without breaking nevertheleſs the charters of theſe ill-judged and prejudicial excluſions; is it in that light not a moſt deſireable, rather than an objectionable meaſure? What are ſuch inſtitutions other than the contrivances of greedy and ſelfiſh men to engroſs into a few hands the general rights of all and perhaps the unjuſt indulgence of adminiſtrations ariſing from partiality or a deſire of corruption? They ſhut up large portions of our globe from the intercourſe and communication of mankind: They prevent and intercept the great connection of our ſpecies apparently deſigned by all-benevolent Providence. The Charter of our Eaſt-India Company lately was near expiring: It has

has ſince become the ſcene of oppoſite parties fiercely contending with one another for power and ſuperiority; but may it not ſeem moſt ſtrange; that hardly one perſon ſhould on either or any of thoſe occaſions offer a ſingle word in favor of admitting our nation in general to the rich trafic and extenſive navigation of India and Aſia; although this meaſure would perhaps have been the moſt probable means to compenſate in ſome degree the late extreme loſs of our American poſſeſſions?

Merchants of great credit nevertheleſs ſometimes much commend the ſtatute in queſtion; but where is the wonder of that? This body certainly are a moſt honourable and reſpectable order of men: They rank highly in that regard; but let me with all condeſcenſion add; that they are notwithſtanding only men compoſed and conſiſting of the

ſame

ſame materials, the ſame temper, bias and paſſions with the reſt of mankind; in whoſe balance, it ſeems no wrong to ſay, that a little perſonal intereſt often outweighs the great, but general object of the public Good. Mercantile and national profit are very independent of each other and by no means always united or connected together. The individual merchant or whole community of merchants may gain by the ſame commerce, as the kingdom univerſally conſidered loſes or they may on the contrary ſuffer in articles of trafic; which nevertheleſs bring money and benefit to the nation. The Act of navigation by forbidding to our plantations all commercial intercourſe with foreigners gives the Britiſh merchant a monopoly againſt the inhabitants of our colonies and by exceedingly reſtraining the trade of Great Britain itſelf to Britiſh ſhips does in a great meaſure the ſame with reſpect

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to our own people, our landed, our manufacturing and every other intereſt at home. It likewiſe ſupports our excluſive companies in the manner before obſerved. Is it then ſurprizing; if any perſons magnify and uphold the ſyſtem; by which they have raiſed their own fortunes or whereon they have founded their eſtabliſhments? I will from reſpect point out no particulars; but what profeſſion or diſtinction of men do in general not earneſtly maintain their peculiar privileges and advantages without always nicely conſidering; whether theſe do or do not contribute to the benefit of the whole and perhaps too often directly contrary to it; unleſs the preſent are times; when private intereſt is particularly expected to be trampled under foot and public ſpirit to ride triumphant? So much then for a free trade, the Act of Navigation and joint ſtock companies.

Our

Our cuſtoms however being in this caſe of courſe diſcarded the next queſtion will be; how we are to ſupply their place and to raiſe our revenue without them; to which I anſwer by inland taxes and duties, The writer will not here go into a long diſcourſe concerning the nature of taxation; but the latter are well underſtood to be left expenſive in the collection, leſs liable to fraud, more productive and more capable of being extended, than the former: Various articles freed from the cuſtoms will ſo be the better ſubjected to the exciſe: The experience of the preſent times, our ſtamps, licences and other proceedings fully confirm theſe opinions: Whatever our wealth and abilities may at the bottom be and ſhall on a continuation prove; whether we really abound in riches or are on the brink of bankruptcy; we can in either caſe and all things conſidered collect by theſe means a larger national income than by any other. Here

Here occurs nevertheleſs a point of the very utmoſt both difficulty and conſequence; which is, how to raiſe or find at any rate and in any manner whatſoever a revenue ſufficient for our occaſions. This matter ariſes from the peculiar and perplexed ſituation of our affairs; from our prodigious demands on one hand and our encumbered condition on the other; circumſtances directly claſhing and inconſiſtent, but of ſuch extreme moment and magnitude nevertheleſs, as to threaten one day the utter diſtraction, if not the diſſolution of our ſtate; unleſs they ſhall before be properly reconciled and ſettled. We muſt therefore take *ſalus populi*, the ſafety and welfare of the whole community for our great guide on the occaſion; without which we cannot poſſibly hope to ſteer or conduct ourſelves through this moſt embarraſſing ſubject.

The

The two particular objects before us then are to preſerve the public and at the ſame time to do our utmoſt for the diſcharging of what is due to the creditors of the ſtate. Theſe circumſtances are moſt cloſely connected and united; for if the nation in general ſhall ſink; Parliamentary ſecurities and every other ſort of property belonging to us will inevitably and irrecoverably be ſwallowed up in the ſame abyſs: That vaſt artificial edifice of our funds evidently does and muſt reſt on the country itſelf, as on its foundation. How can principal or intereſt be paid or what purchaſing will there be into the Stocks; if the whole ſhall any way fail or be overthrown? There is in reality perhaps rarely or never any true, but in ſuch a caſe certainly no diſtinction between the landed, commercial and monied part of the community: All are one and muſt ſtand or fall together. If

our

our circulating caſh or coin in particular ſhall be totally carried out of the kingdom; the rents of our real eſtates will come to nothing, our trade muſt be at an end and an abſolute bankruptcy take place with reſpect to our debt. Theſe conſequences ſeem moſt ſure and it concerns in the greateſt degree therefore every rank, order or deſcription of men among us from the higheſt to the loweſt unexceptionably; that ſo fatal and deſperate an event ſhould without fail be prevented or avoided. The proper means however muſt be employed for the purpoſe or that cannot happen: We muſt towards paying the intereſt and providing a ſinking fund to leſſen the capital of our debt impoſe the utmoſt taxes poſſible; I ſay, the utmoſt taxes that can poſſibly be contrived by miniſters or ſupported by the people without utterly driving all our money

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out of the Iſland; but there (give me likewiſe leave to add, that) we muſt for the ſake of the community, of all parties and bodies whatſoever compoſing it ſtay our hands: We ought and are able to perform ſo much, but no more. If we ſhould urged by the greedineſs of ſome concerned or from any other cauſe proceed beyond the line here pointed out; we ſhall eſpecially leave behind us all poſſibility not only of diſcharging the leaſt part of the capital, but in a ſhort time of anſwering almoſt a ſingle ſhilling of the annual dues of our debt: Such a ſtep muſt in a particular manner prove unavoidably and irretrievably fatal to our funds. The proper rule and bounds of our conduct then ſeem on this ſubject to be; that we ſhould lay and levy the utmoſt taxes; that will by their number or burthen not interfere with their own end and deſtroy the foundation; whereon they

ſhould themſelves ſtand; but which may leave us thoſe neceſſary means of ſupport and ſubſiſtence; without which the whole, our land, trade and public ſecurities muſt all periſh in one univerſal wreck and ruin.

What are then (it may be aſked) the eſpecial impoſitions ſo deſired and deſcribed; who will particularly point them out and tell us; this will and this will not ſuit the propoſed plan; we have now got or not got enough and ſo far you may go, but no further; who ſhall ſatisfy or reconcile on ſuch an occaſion the very many, various, diſcordant, contradictory intereſts ſubſiſting throughout Great Britain; what miniſter of ſtate or community of men is equal to that taſk? To which it ſeems very ſufficient for the writer to anſwer; that they at leaſt and certainly, who by a real repreſentation ſhall concenter and unite in themſelves and

and (as it were) into one focus the wiſdom, knowledge and authority of our whole country; ſhall be well inſtructed in the wants, conveniences and advantages of all; ſhall poſſeſs a full influence over the Public and who will diſpoſe the common concern not indeed with divine perfection, but with the utmoſt integrity, ability and capacity; that human nature and means furniſh or afford. How ſuch an aſſemblage of perſons may likewiſe be obtained; has already been conſidered nor will I therefore revert thither again.

Here nevertheleſs ſays a funded man; all Great Britain and its property are mine and mortgaged to me; its real, perſonal eſtates and every thing elſe: I will accept of no compoſition: I will have the whole or nothing: *Fiat Juſtitia et ruat Cælum.* This is without doubt brave and big language; if it was but

better founded in the public Good or perhaps in common ſenſe and reaſon. The general intereſt however aſſuredly warrants to the writer liberty of ſpeech on the occaſion. Does then any ſuch perſon really deſire totally to undo himſelf, as well as every one elſe; to which end a declaration and reſolution of this kind are undoubtedly the right and direct road? Every virtue is inſeparably united with the welfare and happineſs of mankind nor muſt it therefore be juſtice, but the contrary; which confounds a ſtate and brings down Heaven or its vengeance on the earth.

The preſent topic nevertheleſs is a moſt ſerious conſideration: It not only relates to ſubjects of the laſt importance in themſelves; but likewiſe leads to the moſt nice, abſtruſe and myſterious queſtions in Politics; concerning which the writer may perhaps decline to ſpeak any

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opinions of his own; although he will endeavour to point out the dangers; that appear to lie before us in the courſe, by which we are proceeding.

Suppoſe then that matters ſhould on ſuch principles be puſhed to extremity; that the landed intereſt of the kingdom ſhould be driven to deſpair; that they ſhould ſink under innumerable and inſupportable burthens without finding relief or almoſt mercy from the demands of the funds; that no money ſhould remain among us; that all deſcriptions of men ſhould by theſe means be flung into inextricable diſtraction and confuſion; who knows (I ſay) what queſtions may in ſuch an urgent ſtate of things ariſe; who is ſure, whether no difficulties or objections may be ſtarted concerning the very foundation itſelf of the debt? May not even the extent of human power to bind in ſuch

a caſe poſterity come into diſcuſſion? May it not be debated; to what degree a whole nation (every individual voice taken and unanimouſly given) can in the nature of things run into debt thoſe; who are not only themſelves, but whoſe parents and parents parents are yet unborn? The law of England (it would be obſerved) does with reſpect to private perſons allow of no ſuch obligation in the caſe of living minors. May not this therefore poſſibly be one point?

That however being ſettled and reſolved in the affirmative with regard to an intire and unanimous nation; may not another ſcruple be brought forward concerning the nature of the ſubſtitution required in ſo momentous a matter to take place inſtead of the totality; whether it is neceſſary to be a real or only a nominal repreſentation; one choſen univerſally and equally or by a

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few or an handful inſtead of the Whole? The writer only hints at theſe heads without entering into them. This then may perhaps be the ſecond problem; which the political agitators of thoſe times will propoſe on the ſubject.

Suppoſing however nationality and repreſentation both thus put out of diſpute, may no third diſcourſe ſucceed concerning the freedom of former elections; about bribery and corruption, treaſury and admiralty boroughs, ſeats almoſt bought and ſold at open market and I know not what circumſtances pretended to vitiate the very ſources of public truſt and deputation? Here are then mentioned three (what ſome men will perhaps call) airy imaginations; but which may nevertheleſs become one day earneſt objects of contention.

Will however the matter reſt here? May no bold intruder preſume to pry

into the inſide of any ſuch paſt aſſemblies; to talk concerning the whole power of the executive branch having been employed for the ſingle purpoſe of obtaining and preſerving majorities; concerning miniſterial influence, poſts and preferments, places and penſions, titles and honors or perhaps concerning theſe very debts in queſtion, the very loans and contracts of them having confirmed, carried and enacted themſelves? If that point however ſhould likewiſe be added to the reſt; this chain will then conſiſt of four links (to wit) of the original, national right; of the nature of the Delegation; of the freedom of Election without and the freedom from influence within; ſhould all, three, two or any one of which be on examination found deficient and unfit to bear the vaſt weight dependent thereon; the writer will leave for others to reſolve; how far ſuch a circumſtance would or would not affect the

the claim of the funds; would or would not transfer it from an obligation of right to a conſideration of prudence, expedience or propriety; might or might not occaſion any diſtinction between a miniſterial or a parliamentary and a national debt. So much however ſeems ſure; that it highly behoves the poſſeſſors themſelves well to beware of raſhly and inconſiderately ſhaking or weakening with their own hands this moſt mighty fabric of the kind ever conſtructed by the art of man (that is to ſay) by puſhing too far or too violently their pretenſions and introducing nice, intricate and difficult queſtions on ſo abſtruſe a ſubject. The writer has in this caſe declared no ſentiments of his own; but he makes free to offer theſe cautions for the conſideration of others.

Let thoſe matters however be treated, as they may; there is behind another unan-

unanſwerable and irreſiſtible argument; which is ſaid to know no law except its own and that not only commands all men and mortals, but to which fate itſelf conforms; I mean neceſſity, the abſolute impoſſibility of payment without means. The omnipotence of Parliaments has on ſome late occaſions been ſounded high: They cannot nevertheleſs make money out of nothing; however admirable they may be at diſpoſing of all, that can be obtained. If no more of that univerſal and neceſſary medium ſhall remain among us; how are dividends and intereſt to be ſatisfied without it or what will be left for us inſtead, except the regret and repentance; that we did not take due and ſeaſonable meaſures to retain it, when time and opportunity permitted us ſo to do?

The cry notwithſtanding may continue from the ſame quarter "that we have

have the ſtaff in our hands and will be judged by the law of the ſtrongeſt: That majorities make right and wrong: That the boroughs out number the counties and that many country gentlemen will join with us: That Miniſters borrowed and will ſupport the preſent debt and may deſire to contract more: That we will demand our intereſt to be taken inſtead of our taxes, if it cannot be otherwiſe diſcharged: That this circumſtance will fling all the lands of England into our hands; for that diſtreſs will bring them to market and none be able to buy or hold real eſtates, except in proportion as they have funds wherewith to anſwer the demands made on them from government: That England will change its maſters and the former poſſeſſors neither find nor merit compaſſion; who ſhould have more conſulted and better maintained the public Good; when they had ſo conſiderable a ſhare in it: That if any body

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of men becomes unworthy of their ſituation; ſome other of courſe ſucceeds to them and takes their place: That ſuch is the natural train of events; which ever tends to the benefit and perfection of the whole."

The writer ſcorning to prevaricate will not deny the importance and ſeriouſneſs of ſome among the preceding obſervations. Our debts are indeed gotten to ſo enormous a magnitude, as almoſt to outweigh and bear down all our other property. If our nation or any part of it are become corrupt and regardleſs or inſenſible of their true intereſt; they reſt without doubt in the hands of that all-preſiding Power; whoſe univerſal rules direct and rectify every thing; but what body or deſcription of men among us are intitled to declare themſelves guiltleſs of our calamities; who can pretend to point out the ſucceſſors of others or

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to ſay; what would prove the end of ſuch a moſt unnatural and ruinous contention; as is here hinted at? The noble part of our legiſlature and conſtitution muſt on any like occaſion be of extreme moment in the ſcale: Their very large, heriditary, real poſſeſſions would of courſe and in reaſon incline that moſt reſpectable Order to maintain the preſent, ſettled ſtate of the kingdom; in which they would likewiſe be probably ſupported and aſſiſted by the reſt of their country; for as the queſtion muſt in ſuch an exigency be between the addition or continuance of taxes on one hand and the diſcharging or leſſening the public burthens on the other; the whole commercial part of the community together with the manufacturer and handicraftſman would, as well as the proprietors of land and peaſantry, be deeply intereſted in the iſſue; againſt which united weight any one body, even

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that of the funds muſt be found light in the balance. What reſult however could at any rate be expected from ſuch an horrible ſtrife, but the common ruin of the whole; that we ſhould fall the victims of ſome great cataſtrophe, perhaps become the prey of a foreign invaſion; which would (like a riſing of the ſea around us) overwhelm and deſtroy at once every the moſt minute concern of all Engliſhmen?

As to Adminiſtrations being often loud and forward concerning the ſupport of public credit; that has no doubt been hitherto the caſe and for very evident reaſons; but ſuppoſe a time of war and all poſſibility of borrowing paſſed, a miniſter at the helm unconcerned in contracting the debt, the ſinking fund long vaniſhed, our enemies preſſing and no money to be procured; what meaſure would then be readieſt at hand and moſt probable to take place?

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The Hanoverian government has taken part in the Pruſſian league againſt the Emperor: This is a German concern; but ſhould England be drawn into the dance and called on to pay the piper (as may before have too often been the caſe on like occaſions) what means of our doing this can the wit of man deviſe, except one; which the writer declines to ſignify in direct terms and had rather ſhould occur to others, than to be expreſſed by himſelf. Theſe obſervations however are not flung out to excite any unfit views or hopes in the landed man; whom no ſuch means will then eaſe; for the laſt guinea will in ſuch a conjuncture be aſſuredly drawn from that quarter; which the utmoſt art of taxation can extract. This country ſeems to be ſo threatened with beggary and poverty on one hand and with diſtraction and confuſion on the other; that nothing can in all appearance ſave

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or effectually ſerve it ſhort of ſome prudent, timely, ſalutary modification, accommodation or ſettlement; which may re-eſtabliſh and preſerve the whole and every conſiderable part of it,

Some one however may after all perhaps ſay; That what muſt come, muſt come: When theſe things happen; we will apply to them the due remedies, if not thoſe now recommended, yet ſome other; but give me leave to reply, that it will then be too late and the proper ſeaſon paſt: The hand of fate may be in the fact of making its ſtroke; which none can ſhun or withſtand. Providence is in perfect wiſdom and goodneſs pleaſed to deny mankind all abſolute certainty of the future; which would only anticipate to us unavoidable evils; but we are nevertheleſs granted ſuch a general warning of events; as is neceſſary, convenient and ſuitable to

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our ſituation. The ſtorm gives notice of its gathering; although it is irreſiſtible; when it breaks forth in full force. If men will on ſuch occaſions not be cautioned; they muſt abide the effects of their own inconſiderateneſs and imprudence; whatever they may prove: This ſeems no hard condition of humanity. Strong and ſtriking ſigns have long ſhown themſelves on all ſides of us: With what nevertheleſs are we threatened; other than the natural conſequences of our own conduct? The cataſtrophe may perhaps be now winding up; but who can pretend it to have been haſty or premature? We have no longer any time to ſpare: Our ruin appears to preſs and approach: Palliatives and expedients of leſs importance might formerly have ſufficed; but immediate and effectual meaſures are now neceſſary for our ſafety.

Can there however be any hopes or expectations; that an equal repreſentation of the Commons in Parliament, a national militia and a free trade attended with ſome regulation of our taxes (I ſay) that three ſuch moſt important and material alterations will take place in the ſtate or does not the propoſal of them rather bear the appearance of imagination and enthuſiaſm, than of policy or patriotiſm? Is it not like caſting a figure to draw down the moon or why ſhould not any one as well endeavour to find out the philoſopher's ſtone; by which means the whole national debt might be diſcharged with an heap of pebbles? The writer does not deny himſelf to feel the force of theſe reflections; but on which ſide nevertheleſs is in reality (to return one hard word with another) the ſtrange weakneſs, the folly or infatuation to be found? Put into one ſcale the ruin of

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a great people and empire, public bankruptcy, beggary and the total diſmemberment of its dominions, a debt of near three hundred millions ſterling with hardly a million of money remaining to anſwer it; place then in the oppoſite balance the three meaſures, proviſions or eſtabliſhments before mentioned; when let any one reſolve; in which are the heavieſt evils and thoſe, that will weigh down the others to the ground? What have we here to do in the world except after a reaſonable manner to ſeek our happineſs and avoid the contrary? Have Engliſhmen forgotten the deſire of Good and averſion to Evil inherent in all Beings endowed with perception or can there be any man among us in his ſober mind inſenſible of the public ſituation? Has any thing been propoſed; but what is totally within our own power by due proceedings, within that of the few or the many, the

governors or the governed, the elected or the electors; every one conſidered in his reſpective province? We have for theſe great and excellent ends no foreign or difficult conqueſts to make, no unknown regions to diſcover, no new arts to invent or ſciences to inveſtigate; we need neither to fly in the air or to walk on the water: All the particulars before us depend only on internal regulations (of great importance indeed, but not many in number) among ourſelves. There is on one hand of us the extremity of national miſchiefs and misfortunes and on the other a return of our ancient ſplendor and proſperity together probably with high and great additions: We are ourſelves to make the choice between them; but which muſt in all appearance be done without longer delay. This urgent, inſtant neceſſity ariſes from the preſent and particular condition or exigency of the times; but I

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deſire nevertheleſs to obſerve on the ſame ſubject; that independently of any ſuch conſideration; that ſuppoſing our political hemiſphere all guilded with ſunſhine and the faireſt and moſt flattering proſpect of futurity before our eyes; that ſuppoſing us as glorious as in the reign of Elizabeth, as rich as at the æra of the Revolution and as powerful as before the ſeparation of our American provinces; that adding more circumſtances of the ſame ſort to theſe and heaping proſperity upon proſperity; that advancing no conſtitutional claim of Engliſhmen to be really repreſented in Parliament or to bear arms in the defence of themſelves; I ſay, that without any ſpecial or peculiar conſiderations whatſoever; but in every caſe whether of grandeur, mediocrity, danger or diſtreſs the inſtitutions now recommended (and I repeat them) of a real repreſentation of the people, a true,

national militia and a free trade would for thoſe great and only ends of government, the Good of the Public and the happineſs of mankind be moſt wiſe, prudent, proper and deſireable meaſures of policy.

The writer then has not ſcrupled to repreſent with freedom the miſchiefs and evils apparently impending over our country: He has endeavoured to explain the cauſes and to point out their conſequences: He truſts nevertheleſs; that he has likewiſe propoſed meaſures and proviſions totally adequate to all our dangers; that he has ſounded no alarms without offering at the ſame time full and ſufficient means of our ſafety and wellfare: The wiſdom of our rulers muſt determine the reſt; who will undoubtedly beware not to refuſe the remedies, but to leave the Evils. Having however introduced the names of Ireland and

Scotland

Scotland he begs leave to ſay in particular ſomething concerning thoſe two moſt material parts of the common empire and of our eſſential connections.

Let us in the firſt place then uſe our utmoſt endeavours to keep on the very beſt terms with our Siſter and now the independent kingdom of Ireland. This appears to be one of the very firſt and moſt important points in the political concerns of England. It is a common remark; that arts, ſciences and other human improvements have in their progreſs held the like courſe with the ſun: They aroſe in the Eaſt and have travelled and are travelling weſtward. This idea lately turned the eyes of many men towards America. It is however ſaid with ſenſe and reaſon; that independence ſeems to have come too ſoon by a century on that country: They neither ſought or deſired it; but it was fairly forced upon

them: They appear now almoſt perplexed and embarraſſed with it: Time may be required for that newly diſcovered region to adjuſt and form itſelf into a perfect order or ſettlement: They are ſaid to have contracted a debt of ten millions ſterling; which they may notwithſtanding their boundleſs poſſeſſions of unpeopled land find it difficult enough either to diſcharge or ſupport. The preceding obſervation nevertheleſs may perhaps be verified in Ireland. That country is not ſuch a vaſt waſte and wilderneſs as North America: It is not weakened or encumbered with great numbers of black ſlaves: It is better inhabited and appears as yet at leaſt more ripe and prepared for advancement than the other: The Iriſh ſeem in their collective capacity a truly admirable people, both brave and prudent: Their late conduct on ſome moſt critical and trying occaſions confirms

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that character of them: It has equalled or exceeded any thing delivered down to us of ancient Greece or Rome: They moved nationally and univerſally and with diſcretion, as well as reſolution. Who knows; whether liberty, learning, arts and commerce (although it is for the ſake of mankind to be hoped not empire beyond the government of themſelves) will not ſeat themſelves there in the way to that more diſtant, weſtern and almoſt immenſe continent? May they above all things therefore beware of running further into debt: It is the diſtemper of the time; the error of the moon: The nobleſt or richeſt among them (if I may uſe on the ſubject ſo very coarſe an expreſſion) had better ſell the ſhirts from their backs, than ever conſent again to that baneful and ruinous expedient; if they have any regard for their country or for thoſe to come after them: They ought and deſerve to experience

ence the trouble of really repaying their two millions or whatever is the exact ſum, that they now owe; before they borrow more: They may then have ſome little feeling of the Evil following from this abominable practice of mortgaging ourſelves and poſterity.

Let however theſe fanciful conceptions or effuſions happen, as they may; the friendſhip, affection and attachment of Ireland aſſuredly are of the utmoſt conſequence and importance to Great Britain. They will without entangling or engaging us in the politics, the ambition, jealouſies, ſquabbles and quarrels of the continent probably prove of more benefit, whether in general or on a day of trial, than all the foreign alliances; which the world can afford. Theſe may at times have ſerved the views of ſome few men; but fairly eſtimated they have ever been very far from proving of any profit to the nation.

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How then are ſuch deſirable objects to be obtained and preſerved? To which I will freely anſwer not by influencing the Parliament of Ireland againſt the people of it, by procuring majorities in one place and raiſing diſcontent every where elſe. Is the art of governing by the conſent of the governed forgotten or is ſuch a means now ſuppoſed impracticable? Force long ago prevailed on that ſubject; but the artifice of man has ſince invented, what is ſometimes called by the gentle and faſhionable term of influence: Woe nevertheleſs to the nation, where this diabolical engine of government ſhall be practiſed! It may ſeem to move with ſome ſmoothneſs for a time; but muſt ſo corrupt and infect the very vitals of a ſtate; as to produce in the end every domeſtic and foreign evil. May only the enemies of Great Britain ever experience its fatal effects!

We have however many better grounds of proceeding with reſpect to Ireland and one in particular. That country is moſt ſingularly circumſtanced. The Roman-Catholics, the ſubordinate are ſaid to out-number the Proteſtants, the ruling part, as four or five to one. This difference of religion however is not merely underſtood to concern the infallibility of the Pope, Tranſubſtantiation, Purgatory, the uſe of holy water or ſuch other theological queſtions, but to be ultimately connected with the taniſtry or tenure of Ireland. Documents of ſome ſort are commonly ſaid to be preſerved concerning the change of property throughout that country. This ſeems tender ground; but it is on ſubjects of ſuch extreme importance childiſh to ſcruple mentioning matters of public knowledge and diſcourſe. The turning upſide down and altering the whole preſent ſtate of a great kingdom how-

ever appears conſonant neither to policy or morality. This is the circumſtance; which ſtrongly and cloſely attaches Ireland to England; which draws from them thoſe round and frequent declarations of running with us all fortunes good or evil and which produced in the late war that moſt magnificent vote of twenty thouſand ſeamen: It was this in all appearance, which has on the name of the Roman-Catholics being brought forward ſo ſuddenly and unexpectedly ſtruck the colours and wreſted the ſwords from the hands of the volunteers. We may on this point fully and ſafely depend to a certain degree and within certain bounds; but then the Iriſh will at the ſame time demand and expect their liberty, a free conſtitution, a free commerce and proper means of internal proſperity: We muſt on this confidence not rely too far nor ſtretch the ſtring; until it cracks. Let

us eſpecially beware of attempting or propoſing an union, an union of legiſlature; leſt we ſhould ſee half the ſwords of Ireland drawn in an inſtant. America broke from us rather than ſubmit only to taxation; but can it then be expected; that Ireland will at once part with the whole of its Parliament and legiſlative power or (as they will ſay) in effect of their property? The very idea is wildneſs and madneſs in the extreme. Let us learn prudence from our own experience. How lately had the Thirteen now emancipated and united Provinces not only a cloſe dependence upon us, but a moſt affectionate friendſhip and almoſt reverential regard for the Mother Country? We have however treſpaſſed too much on that ſuppoſition and what is now become of it? Are theſe circumſtancesnot turned into a violent enmity and averſion? We have more reaſon to eaſe the preſent reſtraints of our Weſt-In-

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dian Iſlands and remaining dependencies, than to excite any new complaints or diſlike. Our ſituation requires ſome general, comprehenſive, Commercial Syſtem; which will extend to and include the whole of our dominions or connexions; which will ſuit all their different conditions and ſatisfy their various neceſſities and deſires; but where can this deſcription be found except in a free trade? I will however not revert thither; but independently of that point the good-will, earneſt attachment and powerful ſupport of Ireland form one of the very firſt and moſt eſſential intereſts of England.

The writer next begs leave to ſay ſomething concerning Scotland upon a ſubject; for which a matter not long happened has afforded an opening and opportunity. We are threatened with circumſtances; that bid fair to try our very

very neareſt and firmeſt connexions; the firſt among which may without exception be reckoned North Britain. I will not go into a general diſcourſe of the original reaſons for or againſt the union; but it evidently cannot now be diſſolved without the greateſt diſadvantage to England and eſpecially in any time of particular diſtreſs or difficulty; a conjuncture of which kind only can give riſe or effect to ſuch an event. Should this eſſential part of ourſelves be in a like caſe torn from us and perhaps turned to enmity; will it not prove as it were the completion of our evils and calamities? Any due means therefore of cementing, ſtrengthening and continuing the preſent conjunction between the two countries cannot for us Engliſhmen in particular, but be a moſt deſireable and advantageous, as well as moſt neceſſary and important meaſure.

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There ſeems then to be no more ſure and effectual, more eaſy and fit method of compaſſing this purpoſe ſo devoutly on all ſides to be wiſhed than to introduce a greater number of the Scottiſh nobility into the Engliſh peerage; than to unite and aſſociate fully and perfectly in the ſame privileges the firſt northern with the firſt ſouthern families of our Iſland. The noble objects of this propoſition ſeem at preſent to be ſituated in a peculiar ſtate of jealouſy and mortification: They are deprived of the high pre-eminence; which they once enjoyed of conſtituting wholly the legiſlature of one kingdom; but are nevertheleſs denied admittance into that of another, except at the precarious will, pleaſure and humour of the miniſter for the time being; that is to ſay, through an election commonly governed and influenced by him. It need not to be obſerved; how much ambition or a deſire of power and

ſuperiority operates on our ſpecies in general, but certainly not leaſt on perſons diſtinguiſhed by their birth and rank. Where would then be the wonder; ſhould men ſo circumſtanced entertain ſome latent deſire to recover the former privileges of their anceſtors or endeavour to diſſolve the intervening obſtacle; whenever a fair opportunity may offer itſelf for that purpoſe? What is there more than a ſtatute or two of either nation in the way? The noble and ancient families of Scotland have a very great power and influence in their country: There ſubſiſts among them from the remains of the feudal tenures, as likewiſe from ſome local cauſes a clanſhip, an attachment and dependence totally unknown to us in England. Should however any thing like the meaſure now preſumed to be hinted at take place; theſe prevalent paſſions and inducements would be engaged on the favourable

vourable ſide and the ſame honorable perſons become the ſtrongeſt links in the chain of the preſent union. They will by this means be legiſlators of a more extenſive government; will preſide over the ſouthern, as well as the northern part of our Iſland; will have a wider field for their power and a more conſpicuous ſcene of their ambition; but when do ſuch cauſes not produce their due effects in breaſts compoſed of human materials?

The writer is led to theſe obſervations not only by the importance of the matter; but by a circumſtance that has lately happened and which concerns this ſubject. The Duke of Hamilton was ſoon after the union created by Queen Anne an Engliſh or properly a Britiſh Duke by the title of Brandon. This incident brought before the Houſe of Lords a new point; that is to ſay;

whether a Britiſh could with full effect be engraf'd on a Scottiſh peerage; I mean; whether ſuch a grant would confer a right to ſit and vote in our Houſe of Peers. However any impartial and unprejudiced perſon may on conſidering the caſe now wonder at ſuch a doubt or queſtion; it was nevertheleſs then determined in the negative. I will make no further reflection on that head than to remark; that it happened in the year ſeventeen hundred and eleven at a moſt critical time with reſpect to the two parties of Whig and Tory; when their contentions run exceedingly high and the numbers and balance were among our Peers very nearly equal between them. This reſolution however prevented any more Scotch from being made Britiſh Peers; until lately that the preſent Duke of Hamilton in the year 1782 again renewed by petition to the Houſe of Peers the ſame queſtion concern-

concerning his Dukedom of Brandon; when the affair took a contrary turn and was decided in favor of his Grace's claim. It may appear preſumptuous in a private perſon to ſignify even his approbation of a ſentence given by ſo high and auguſt an aſſembly, as our upper and hereditary Houſe of Legiſlature; but the writer cannot refuſe himſelf the ſatisfaction to ſay in the ſituation of a diſintereſted Engliſhman; that this latter ſeems a moſt juſt judgement in itſelf, as likewiſe wiſe and prudent with regard to its general and political conſequences; which are in his opinion of great importance. The Crown now has by that determination confeſſedly the full and free prerogative of conferring effectually Britiſh Peerages on Scottiſh Peers and therefore alſo the means and opportunity of confirming, ſtrengthening and improving the pre-

ſent aſſociation or incorporation between theſe two portions of our nation.

Alarms are indeed ſometimes expreſſed about multiplying the ariſtocratical body of our conſtitution; but the writer conceives without the leaſt real ground or foundation for any ſuch fears. The greater the number of hands into which the ſame degree of power is divided and diſtributed generally the better for mankind and for the ſubjects of it; for it commonly becomes by that means more moderate, more lenient and more amenable to reaſon: Each individual loſes by ſuch a diviſion ſome ſhare of his own; but too much power placed in one perſon is the great and particular bane of our ſpecies: It almoſt always ſpoils the poſſeſſor and hardly ever fails to be abuſed towards the objects of it. There not only ſeems therefore little room for any jealouſy on this head;

head; but ſuch a circumſtance will certainly operate in a manner contrary to the objection.

The writer is likewiſe ſenſible; that his preſent topic peculiarly relates to the prerogative of the Prince; but he conceives; that every part of our excellent conſtitution was contrived and appointed for the common benefit of All and the diſcuſſion of its exerciſe therefore to be included in the freedom and franchiſes of an Engliſhman. The caſe ſeems to be the ſame on this head, as with reſpect to peace and war and the other branches of the Prerogative. The executive Power itſelf beſides ſeems exceedingly concerned in the preſervation of the union. A ſeparation in that point does indeed not neceſſarily imply a defection or alienation from the Crown; but might it not probably prove a leading ſtep towards that event or who

knows; what might be the conſequences of ſuch a circumſtance at ſome fatal and unfortunate conjuncture? Our Princes have ever entertained an earneſt deſire of a cloſe connexion between theſe their two kingdoms; ſince England and Scotland firſt became ſubject to the ſame ſcepter; although there never was perhaps ſo much real and ſerious reaſon for ſuch a policy, as at the preſent period.

Should nevertheleſs theſe things be looked on, as concerns at an immenſe diſtance from us and too far removed in the infinite courſe of time to require or deſerve our immediate conſideration; let any one reflect; how many and great events are within a very ſhort ſpace of our experience actually come to paſs; of which even the leaſt hints would only about a dozen years ago have been deemed effects of a diſordered mind,

mind, of a gloomy imagination or fantaſtical enthuſiaſm. Is not it the duty of Miniſters and Stateſmen (who aſſume the management of kingdoms or nations) to foreſee and prevent probable or poſſible evils; before they approach too near or become too ſtrong to be either avoided or encountered? Had of late ſuch been the caſe or timely admonitions duly attended to; how different would at this inſtant be the condition of our country! The writer has however made free to offer theſe his ſentiments concerning Ireland and Scotland; whoſe ſituations with reſpect to us are moſt material and eſſential objects in our preſent circumſtances.

We may nevertheleſs be perhaps here called on to turn our eyes totally another way and told; that there is yet one reſource remaining with us, which put in practice will do wonders towards

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anſwering all our many exigences. We may be aſked; why we do not firſt equalize and being once in poſſeſſion of that point then double or treble the land tax; on what account ſhould London and Middleſex and the parts of the kingdom bordering upon them bear ſo great a ſhare of this heavy burthen; which the more diſtant counties are ſaid hardly to touch with a little finger? Why are theſe particular provinces to be ſo proſcribed and where is the right or reaſon, juſtice or equity of ſuch a diſtinction and proceeding? Sayings of this ſort certainly are often flung out and ſtreſs ſeems ſometimes to be laid upon them, as if they were well grounded; but *audi alteram partem:* Let us likewiſe hear and conſider the other ſide of the queſtion.

Ought we in the firſt place then not to begin ſuch a reformation by equaliſ-

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ing (if I may repeat the term in that ſenſe) the government itſelf; which is in every ſtate the main and leading circumſtance; but eſpecially ſo in our own. Our Parliament always meets at London: Our King and his Court commonly reſide at London: The head quarters of our great companies and offices, of the Bank, the India Company, the South-Sea Company, the Cuſtoms, the Exciſe, the Treaſury, the Admiralty, the Navy and Ordnance; our chief courts of juſtice, the Chancery, King's-Bench, Common-Pleas and Exchequer are together with very many other eſtabliſhments of the ſame ſort all ſettled and permanent at London: The annual produce of our innumerable taxes and the occaſional ſums of our immenſe loans are the whole of them brought to and paid at London. Theſe two laſt articles alone hardly amount to ſo little as fourteen millions a year during peace

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and to almoſt twice that money in time of war; all (I ſay) received at London. The particulars before mentioned nevertheleſs do by no means compleat the account; for the idle and diſſipated, the gay and pleaſurable, the buſy and ambitious are likewiſe drawn by theſe other attractions; inſomuch that all the wealth of England is perpetually paſſing to London; as the blood of the animal body flows to the heart: It is from thence in the ſame manner alſo diſperſed again over our ſeveral counties accord- to their different circumſtances and particularly their diſtance; who only or chiefly ſubſiſt by the ſhare and part of the circulation thus returned to them. Our metropolis by ſuch means exceeds for magnitude any other throughout the world in compariſon of the country annexed to it; while the men of Middleſex ſo miſerably and piteouſly exclaim concerning the inequality of the land-tax;

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but whether are we to feel compaſſion for theſe poor and oppreſſed people or to admire at the ſtrange prejudices and partiality of mankind; when they judge in their own cauſe or caſe?

Ought not theſe great favours or benefits of the State to be divided and diſtributed more equally; before we ſet about altering one ſingle and only tax; that bears no manner of proportion or compariſon in the caſe and which is hardly as the duſt upon the balance? Should not the government firſt be in turns held at York, at Lincoln, at Monmouth, at Briſtol, at Canterbury and other places of the kingdom or if ſuch a plan is from the long continuance of a different courſe repreſented, as impoſſible and impracticable; does not that reaſon render the oppoſite propoſition ſo likewiſe according to reaſon and equity; which are or ought to be

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the moſt unſurmountable objections and obſtacles among mankind? What ſort of juſtice, of balancing or counterpoiſing is it to take out of the lighter ſcale and add to the heavier; when the contrary is required?

If it ſhall be obſerved; that theſe compenſations do not exactly correſpond; that ſome perſons or places may be benefited and others ſuffer in both ways; I aſk, in what great and extenſive caſes is it or well can it be otherwiſe? Moſt wiſe and powerful nature itſelf ſo ſeems to diſpenſe its boons: Various ſoils have a different produce and various climates a different ſunſhine: Each has its own advantages and diſadvantages, but in a general and not a preciſe proportion. Such varieties are much more unavoidable in human allotments and appointments. Every ſingle tax conſidered in itſelf is neceſſarily unequal;

equal: It will of courſe bear more particularly hard upon ſome perſons or places, ſome bodies or profeſſions, ſome trade or manufacture, ſome commodity or merchandize than on others. How partial, as well as high is the duty upon hops? It is the only one impoſed on any immediate production of huſbandry: It is confined to a very few and ſmall portions or ſpots of our Iſland: It amounts upon an average in the principal plantation to at leaſt four pounds for the acre by the year; which is perhaps ten times as much, as the ſame quantity of land produces at an average clear to the proprietor throughout the kingdom. The like is more or leſs the caſe with regard to numberleſs other particulars. Governments can in this reſpect only endeavour to diſtribute Good and Evil, conveniences and inconveniences with an even hand on the whole;

whole; to balance or compenſate taxes, impoſitions and other circumſtances with one another and in an univerſal manner: Theſe things will after all be but imperfectly done; eſpecially in a nation ſo over-burthened and incumbered; as we are. Nothing of this ſort however will (I ſay) be improved or mended by taking from the lighter part and adding to that ſide; which already preponderates.

As to increaſing and raiſing more money on the total of the land-tax; that is a different and a wide conſideration; but is it not highly reaſonable to ſee what will really remain to the holder of land; when our affairs ſhall be finally fixed and ſettled; before we proceed to that ſtep. Real eſtates now pay to the government and other eſtabliſhments the preſent land-tax, the poor-rate probably equal on the whole at leaſt to a ſecond ſuch tax, the church-rate, the high-

highway-rate, the window-tax and likewiſe that extreme charge the tythes, beſides their very great ſhare of the cart-tax, the waggon-tax and the horſe-tax; to ſay nothing of buildings and repairs, which laſt articles commonly cauſe conſiderable deductions from the clear income. Theſe burthens are proper to real eſtates; the poſſeſſors of which nevertheleſs are ſubject to our other taxes in common with the reſt of the nation. Does indeed the whole of our taxation not ultimately fall on and affect the land? Lord Moleſworth tells us in his excellent account of Denmark; that the value of land there was by the change of their government from free to abſolute ſo leſſened within the ſpace of thirty years; that the profits of ſome eſtates would not pay the taxes of them; but which the proprietors were nevertheleſs denied the privilege to abandon, being obliged to diſcharge the duties in-

cumbent on them from their other poſſeſſions; which produced a ſurplus. May the good Genius of England guard our country from any ſuch ſituation; but is already our land by the condition of the times not abated exceedingly and univerſally in its price and ſunk and ſinking in its rents? Let us at leaſt then be content to learn how far real eſtates will at length fall, what will or will not after the full completion of our national incumbrances and the final ſettlement of our public affairs be left from the land; before we bear down with inſupportable burthens that great object; which aſſuredly is and muſt ever be in reality the ſource of our taxes, the foundation of our ſtate and the maintenance of our community. Theſe things are thrown out with no view to raiſe any jealouſy or rivalſhip between the landed and funded intereſts; but on the direct contrary in order to unite and conciliate them;

them; which however cannot poſſibly be compaſſed without ſome mutual equity and moderation on each ſide.

We may nevertheleſs perhaps be told; that theſe conſiderations are not only gloomy and melancholy, but totally needleſs and unneceſſary; for that our national reſources are continually reſounded in our ears and the faireſt proſpects perpetually placed before our eyes; that numberleſs ſchemes for the payment of our debts and the re-eſtabliſhment of our credit are daily printing and publiſhing. What have we therefore to do except to chuſe among theſe; to reſtore by that means our finances and according to a favourite language of ſome men to figure again among nations; as if there was any better appearance for a people than that of their own internal proſperity?

To all which I ſay; that our late miſchiefs and misfortunes came upon us by regular degrees; that they were both moſt evident of themſelves and pointed out to us by ſeveral perſons before-hand; that very moderate prudence and diſcretion would have preſerved us from the heavieſt of our preſent evils; but a certain deſcription of people were conſtantly crying peace, where there was no peace; I mean, extolled on every occaſion our wiſe meaſures; unceaſingly aſſured us of our endleſs reſources, our inexhauſtible riches and irreſiſtible power; decried the force, courage and counſels of our adverſaries; treated as falſe prophets and croakers of calamities thoſe; who repreſented the conſequences now actually and moſt ſeverely experienced by our country: All which and more they apparently did to pleaſe the powers in being and to blind the eyes of the Public; that we might the more readily and eaſily be led or driven

driven down the precipice lying before us. They brought us by theſe means from a profound peace attended with the fervent affection of our colonies to an American war, from an American war to a French war, from a French war to a Spaniſh war and from theſe three united wars by a moſt unaccountable ſtroke of politics to a Dutch war, a Dutch war begun by ourſelves beſides one or two other wars proceeding at the ſame time with the native princes and people of the Eaſt-Indies. They ſeem now to continue in the ſame line; to acknowledge no miſtakes or miſconduct; to tell us that we have the whole world within ourſelves: That we need only to load with taxes the kingdom at home and to reſtrain in their commerce our dominions abroad; when all will in a little time be well and the halcyon days of Old England ſoon reviſit us again. With theſe perſons the writer does not

pretend to debate: Their reaſons appear ſuperior to plain ſenſe and their principles to proceed from other cauſes than the public Good: Some of them have received their rewards by poſts and preferments and others perhaps by titles and honors; but how they appeaſe and ſatisfy their own breaſts (when they reflect on the effects of their doctrines and counſels and if they are ever employed on that ſubject) he does with all due deference leave to themſelves.

Another ſet of men appear on the return of peace to have been rapt into a momentary enthuſiaſm and to imagine; that the nation would hardly be ſenſible of its additional burthens; that our annual expences would immediately contract themſelves into a moderate and manageable compaſs; our barren and fruitleſs taxes become productive; that we ſhould have only to receive our millions with one hand and to repay them

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for our intereſt and expenditure with the other and that nothing more than a little reſt and patience is wanting for our perfect recovery. If ſuch ſentiments are ſincere and effuſions of this ſort fairly flow from the warmth of any men's good wiſhes towards the community; they without doubt deſerve in that light all indulgence; but it is exceedingly to be regretted; that the facts and events themſelves ſhould in the mean time keep at ſo wide a diſtance from ſuch flattering ideas and conceptions. It is not by deceiving ourſelves or others, but by examining and conſidering without biaſs or prejudice the true and actual condition of our country; that we can really hope to ſerve the Public.

There remains yet to be mentioned on this ſubject however ſome other perſons of a very different turn and cha-

racter from either of the preceding deſcriptions; really wiſe and able men in Politics, of perfect integrity and unfeign'd patriotiſm; who have inveſtigated and laid before the Public the true ſtate of our national affairs; have expoſed our paſt, ruinous ways of borrowing and recommended inſtead well-conſidered and well-judged meaſures for the future management of our revenue; ſuch, as had they been in time adopted and purſued might have prevented our preſent difficulties and embarraſſments. Theſe perſons the writer highly honors and reſpects; but he does not know, how far or whether he at all differs from them. He has peruſed their works with pleaſure, information and attention: He nevertheleſs does not recollect them to have ever declared or ſignified; that the plans propoſed by them are of themſelves ſufficient for the preſervation of our country; that they are in our

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ſituation on the whole adequate to that great, neceſſary and eſſential end. They expreſs themſelves like prudent and cautious, as well as informed and underſtanding men: They ſeem to ſay; that certain methods pointed out are the moſt proper means for our reſtoration; if our condition will in ſuch a courſe yet admit of that circumſtance; but the writer humbly conceives there not to be the leaſt meaning; that the Public ſhould abandon themſelves without looking further; if that is not the caſe. He earneſtly deſires not to miſrepreſent or miſinterpret the very reſpectable perſons here alluded to; but this is however the manner in which the writings publiſhed by them have appeared to him.

Archimedes ingeniouſly ſaid; that he could move the earth; if he might have room where to raiſe and ſet his engines. We are likewiſe told a feigned and fabu-

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lous ſtory of a wager concerning draining the ocean; when the rivers running into it were previouſly required to be ſtopped. Are however theſe caſes no way like our own? Procure us perpetual peace; ſtay the courſe and current of our money out of the kingdom; find effectual, ſufficient and unfailing taxes; provide for our annual expences within their own period; eſtabliſh beſides a ſacred ſurplus or ſinking fund independent of miniſters; when the accumulation of intereſt upon intereſt aſſuredly will in a moderate time firſt leſſen and afterwards diſcharge our debt; but are not the preceding poſtulata or requiſites neceſſary in this caſe; as well as the laſt-mentioned means? Muſt there not be a ſolid ſettlement to ſtand on or may we otherwiſe not reſemble a perſon; who ſhould build with exact ſymmetry, admirable beauty and according to the rules of Vitruvius, Palladio or Jones,

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but upon an unſound and rotten foundation; which would infallibly tumble in; before his edifice was gotten half or a quarter of the way towards its completion?

Is it not next to certain; that money will in the civilized and cultivated parts of the world be one day at a quarter or leſs than a quarter per cent.? Who knows; whether even the uſe of gold and ſilver, as a medium of exchange, may in a very long courſe of time not fairly wear out by the extreme plenty and abundance of thoſe now moſt ſcarce and precious metals? What do nevertheleſs any ſuch reflections or conſiderations avail either an individual or a nation; who is from a preſent preſſure in danger of immediate bankruptcy? The great events of fate are every where and at all moments perpetually proceeding nor will be ſuſpended or turned

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aſide for the pleaſure or convenience of Engliſhmen; who ſhould before have better conſidered the conſequences of their conduct or muſt now conform to exiſting cauſes and the ſtate of things; if they expect to be preſerved from the effects of them.

If we ſhould in this moment of peace pay off half a million; it will be a two and fortieth part or leſs of what we have run into debt in a year of war*; but our periods of peace and war have ſince the Revolution been on the whole in a near proportion to one another. A ſingle or ſeparate meaſure of that kind therefore may give a ſudden ſtart to Stocks and occaſion an holiday in Exchange-alley; but muſt be mere moonſhine in leſſening our incumbrances or otherwiſe contributing to the public

* In 1781 we incurred on the loan only a debt of 21 millions beſides all unpaid ſervices of the ſame year.

Good. What is all ſuch children's play in a ſtate encompaſſed on every ſide with the moſt tremendous ſigns and circumſtances? Should it be deſigned by this means one day to borrow more; may that practice never prevail again in England nor (with the good will of the writer, as a well-wiſher to mankind) elſewhere in the world. It is without doubt now a favourite and reigning faſhion for ſtates to borrow, borrow; but they aſſuredly will upon experience become heartily ſick of it and poſſibly the lenders too: We may ourſelves perhaps be found among the firſt and moſt deſperate patients of this hoſpital. The combined operation of very many, multiplied payments can only make in our caſe any real or material impreſſion; but neither muſt that be counteracted or over-ruled by collateral cauſes or circumſtances ſtronger than itſelf. The writer therefore is by theſe obſervations very far from

from meaning to depreciate, to diſcredit or diſcountenance certain excellent plans propoſed to the Public for the reduction of our debt: He deſires to unite and connect them with other eſſential meaſures; which are in themſelves neceſſary and whereby thoſe would likewiſe be more certainly and effectually carried into execution. Our condition requires the union of every poſſible help and aſſiſtance; that we ſhould firſt lay a firm and ſolid foundation and then raiſe upon it a proper and well-contrived ſuperſtructure; but may the heaping of taxes and burthens upon one another without a due conſideration of both the immediate and ultimate conſequences not haſten and enhance our ruin?

There are however (it may be obſerved) public hopes and expectations ariſing from a different cauſe, than any hitherto ſet forth; that is to ſay, from the

the perſonal temper and character of our preſent Miniſter; of whoſe virtues, abilities and intentions the nation in general entertain a favourable opinion. This circumſtance has been an encouragement for the writer both to begin and to proceed in the preſent diſcourſe; but *maxime amica veritas*; the truth and the Good of our country are the great and only objects; which every man ought on ſuch an occaſion to have before his eyes: It muſt indeed be an extremely ill compliment made to any one at their expence nor is (I dare ſay) here deſired.

Thrones are then ſaid to be commonly ſurrounded by an almoſt impenetrable circle of adulation and obſequiouſneſs; but Miniſters likewiſe have about them uſually a ſmaller circumference of condeſcenſion and complaiſance: They are ſeldom witneſſes to the

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wants of the manufacturer or the diſtreſſes of the tradeſman in towns and cities and yet leſs to the difficulties of the farmer or the hardſhips of the labourer in the country! It might be fortunate for mankind and perhaps not diſadvantageous to themſelves; if they more frequently were ſo; but they live and move in another ſphere. The loud cries and clamours of the multitude may ſometimes reach their ears; but are probably often attributed to party, to the artifice and incitement of factious leaders. Theſe obſervations are thrown out generally and promiſcuouſly nor with any particular application; but ſhould the public ſituation of this time appear in its true colours; give me leave to ſignify my very free, although moſt humble opinion; that the right honorable gentleman now preſiding in our adminiſtration would inſtead of ſeeing all around him only a permanent ſplendor

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and greatneſs perceive himſelf to have hold of a bomb; which bids fair to burſt in his hands. The preſent condition and courſe of affairs muſt neceſſarily and irreſiſtibly drive him from the helm; although his adverſaries may be unable to do it. The want of money threatens to fling every thing among us into the laſt confuſion; but what muſt be the caſe of a Firſt Miniſter in a conjuncture of that kind? I do not know, with whom or what to compare him; but an Epicurean philoſopher of old might as well have fancied himſelf able to remain undiſturb'd with his imagined world of atoms flying about his ears; as one placed in that conſpicuous poſt ſo expect during ſuch a national diſorder and diſtraction.

The writer here deſires the indulgence of adverting to ſome occurrences of no

long date. A noble Lord and late Miniſter had got himſelf and his country into ſuch a ſituation; that he could not move forward or backward: He was able neither to make peace nor to carry on the war then ſubſiſting: He thereupon reſigned and retired: A noble Marquis much reſpected by the public took his place at the Board of Treaſury and an honorable friend of his became Secretary of State. This gentleman however tinker'd and hammer'd during his time at a ſeparate peace with one or another power; a ſcheme both evidently impoſſible and impracticable in itſelf and likewiſe inſufficient for our many and great exigencies; if it could have and had been effected. The Marquis unexpectedly departed this world lamented and regretted by his country; when a noble Earl, now a Marquis ſucceeded to his ſituation and the right honor-

honorable Secretary haſtily flung up his poſt in a fit of paſſion. The new Miniſter however made the peace of Paris; which (the writer will be bold to ſay) ſaved in all probability and appearance the nation.

I do not mean in proof of this point to enter into the general ſtate and circumſtances of the late war; but we had been on the very brink of loſing Jamaica: It was downright chance and accident; that we did not. It is by this not meant the victory to have been for a moment or in the leaſt doubtful; when that memorable battle between Lord Rodney and Monſ. de Graſſe was once joined at ſea. No man living is more willing to ſtake his private fortunes or (ſo far as concerns him) the fate of his country on the ſkill and bravery of our ſeamen, than the writer; but it de-

pended on the winds and the waves, as likewiſe on the will of the French Admiral; whether the two fleets ſhould ever have come within a due diſtance of one another for ſuch an iſſue and the writer believes himſelf to have the authority of our commander on the occaſion to ſay; that if this naval engagement and the ſucceſs attending it had not happily taken place; the iſland of Jamaica was in effect loſt and gone.

What muſt in ſuch a caſe then have been the conſequence? Would Spain have conſented to part again with this moſt valuable poſſeſſion formerly their own, but taken from them by us? Certainly not. Could we in the late unequal conteſt have wreſted it from their hands by force, by fleets and armies? This is no leſs unlikely than the other; but what Miniſter nevertheleſs could poſſibly

poſſibly have made peace without it? Who can give an anſwer to that queſtion? We remember; how the importance of Gibraltar was magnified, preſs'd and inſiſted on; when there appeared ſome little probability or expectation of its being given up to make way for an accommodation. What nevertheleſs is that fortreſs (however deſireable in itſelf) when placed in compariſon with this almoſt ineſtimable iſland?

It muſt have been war without end; but would in ſuch an exigency London or England itſelf not have been ſtaked upon the event againſt Jamaica? We were then borrowing at above ſix per cent. intereſt beſides a premium of 50 per cent. on repayment of the principal *. How much longer could we have

* A ſubſcriber of 100l. to the loan of 1782 had for it 100l. 3 per cents; 50l. 4 per cents; an annuity of 17s.

continued in that courſe; but if our credit had at ſuch a conjuncture and during the war fail'd or faulter'd; what external, as well as domeſtic diſorder muſt it have created? How could our navies and armies have been paid and kept together or what would have prevented the enemy from landing on our coaſt and marching to the metropolis? The writer almoſt ſhudders at repreſenting theſe things nor will he proceed in doing it; but what muſt be the ſtate of a people; whoſe ſecurity only depends on chance and the uncertain concurrence of extraordinary and unlikely circumſtances? All ſuch dangers and probabilities however were done away by the peace of Paris.

17s. 6d. for 78 years; $\frac{3}{16}$ of a lottery ticket and almoſt half a year's intereſt of his money before it was paid, affording on the whole an annual intereſt of more than ſix per cent.

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Here nevertheleſs ſucceeded indeed a curious ſcene. The Ex-miniſter and the Ex-ſecretary united themſelves together by a conjunction unparallel'd even among ſtateſmen or party-men. I will ſay no more on that head; but having ſo done they drove by means of an Houſe of Commons twice choſen during the adminiſtration and under the influence of the Ex-miniſter; they drove (I ſay) the then Miniſter from his ſtation on account or pretence of this very peace, this peace of Paris; which I will once more repeat to have ſo ſaved our country from the deſperate ſituation; into which it was brought by one of theſe very leaders and from whence the other had on experience proved incapable to deliver or extricate us.

This will undoubtedly be one day accounted a memorable circumſtance in the

annals of Great Britain; but does then the right honorable gentleman now at the helm expect on occaſion any fairer or better quarter; than his friend found before him? The voice of the people is ſaid to be the voice of God; to which proverbial expreſſion the writer very ſincerely ſubſcribes; but it muſt be interpreted in a due ſenſe. The ocean is a great means of diſpenſing the bleſſings and bounties of nature to the world: It facilitates the mutual intercourſe of mankind and conveys wealth, arts and knowledge from one nation to another; but theſe attributes muſt be underſtood of it in a ſtate of calmneſs and ſerenity; for if the winds and waves ſhould ariſe; if the peaceable boſom of the deep be diſturbed by ſtorms and tempeſts; it bears down all before it and ſwallows up the very veſſels contrived and employed for thoſe beneficial purpoſes. So

is it with the many and the multitude. They compoſe nations and contain by that means in themſelves the combined wiſdom and underſtanding of the Whole, a wiſdom next among men to that of the Divinity. Every individual likewiſe deſires neceſſarily his own welfare: The collective body of the people therefore ſeek of courſe the general Good; which is not only the true end of all human government; but (I ſpeak it with the moſt ſubmiſſive reverence) appears on a larger ſcale to be the great object of Providence itſelf in the production of exiſtence. The voice or ſenſe of the Public ſeems in theſe lights then complimented with ſo high a compariſon; but it muſt be meant in a ſteady and ſettled ſtate; for ſhould their breaſts and paſſions become from any cauſe or by any means violently and univerſally agitated; you may as well talk reaſon

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to the roaring and raging ſea, as to an exaſperated and tumultuous populace. Such is human nature and undoubtedly framed and faſhioned after the fitteſt and the wiſeſt manner. It is the part and province of ſtateſmen, of perſons undertaking the conduct and government of great nations to underſtand this our temper and conſtitution and their eſpecial duty to give no riſe to ſuch dangerous or deſperate conjunctures. Should nevertheleſs the people of England be by our debts, our taxes, a deficiency of ſpecie and in conſequence of theſe cauſes by want, famine or other evils driven to deſpair; ſhould they be heated into licentious riots and in their undiſcerning fury demand ſome victim or ſacrifice, as an atonement for their ſufferings; is it to be ſuppoſed; that any original and real miniſter of our misfortunes will

will on ſuch an occaſion come forward and ſay "*I did it:* Vent your vengeance on me." No; will not it rather be the ſhop-tax, the Iriſh propoſitions or ſomething yet unknown, any thing or nothing; no matter what?

The writer however may here be checked and aſked; what is at the bottom then the meaning of theſe big-bears and ſpectres? Is any one deſerving the name of a man to be diverted from his deſigns by conſiderations of this ſort; when he has in view the Good of the Public and the preſervation or ſalvation of his country, inward ſupports; which ought to bear him far above the apprehenſion of dangers and difficulties; if any ſuch obſtacles did really lay in his way? To which the writer anſwers by ſubſcribing both with his hand and his heart

heart to theſe truly excellent ſentiments: He had not the leaſt thought of throwing out ſuch things, as terrors: They ſeem poſſible; but it is to be hoped; that they are very far from probable: His only intention was that of bringing this point to the very iſſue now before us. He conceives the objects mentioned to be the nobleſt purpoſes of the human mind, as well as the beſt purſuits of virtue and integrity; but we muſt then be ſure to build on their foundation; for this whole matter turns on that circumſtance: We muſt beware of being deceived, as well as of deceiving: We muſt not let thoſe ſolemn and almoſt ſacred expreſſions be abuſed to ſanctify or recommend any lower and meaner ends, but much leſs ruinous plans or proceedings: We muſt really and truly endeavour to ſave our country; which cannot according to all appearance however

ever be in our caſe compaſſed by accumulating burthens upon burthens and by adding reſtraints to one another. Theſe methods have brought and reduced us from a glorious and proſperous to our preſent, humiliated ſtate; from whence therefore they are moſt unlikely to recover and reſtore us. Our condition requires other means, other ſchemes, other ideas, a more comprehenſive and better conſidered policy nor is it ſurely any wonder; if this great nation cannot elſe be reſcued from the utmoſt brink of perdition; on which it now ſeems to ſtand. A former miniſter has taken effectual care on that head: This work was not done by halves; whatever may have been the caſe of any other. It would indeed be an eaſy poſt to manage ſtates in the worſt, as well as in the beſt times or manner; if one perſon could pull down our temple at his pleaſure

ſure and another build it up again in three days. Experience however diſproves already any ſuch conception. Our country can in all appearance only be preſerved by leſſening its embarraſſments and incumbrances, by abating and reducing its duties. This (it may be ſaid) is a more difficult taſk, than downright taxation nor does the writer deny it to be the thorny and narrow path; but (if I may continue the uſe of holy words) it is the only way leading to our ſalvation. One miniſter has condemned our country to deſtruction: Let another however beware of becoming the executioner; although not on account of perſonal danger, but for the ſake of the Public; whoſe ſafety and welfare are the only worthy objects of ambition. Theſe things may not be the voice of flattery or ſycophancy; but they are nevertheleſs the language of regard and ſincerity.

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There is however another yet greater than the Miniſter; one whoſe intereſt is in general and particularly in the preſent caſe moſt intimately connected with that of the Public and for the eaſe and felicity of whom the writer wiſhes on each account to offer his fervent vows and loyal ſentiments. He can nevertheleſs not perform this without a proper liberty; but which he hopes and truſts to be permitted, although on ſo exalted an occaſion. We are then not now to to learn; that the higheſt pinnacle of human grandeur is nevertheleſs ſubject to the ſtorms of fate and fortune. Thirty one of our Engliſh princes have ſince the Norman conqueſt compleated their reigns; of whom no leſs a number than ſix came to violent ends by the hands of their ſubjects, three in a ſucceſſion of four kings; two others ſpent part of their days in baniſhment; one

of

of whom ſo finiſhed his life and whoſe deſcendants continue in that ſtate. Had the like fatality attended any private family; how would it ſeem marked with misfortunes and calamities? Such enormities are happily paſſed nor more in all appearance to be apprehended among us: The writer might otherwiſe have ſcrupled to expreſs them ſo plainly; but what changes and revolutions of every ſort nevertheleſs are perpetually taking place in the vaſt variety of events, in the innumerable combinations of chance and time; which compoſe the courſe of the world and concern all ranks and orders of men? How many ſtates have in hiſtory ſuffered by foreign foes and how many more will infallibly do the ſame in futurity? It was well and wiſely ſaid by the late Earl of Chatham; that although the Crown of England was in

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no danger of being torn from the preſent rightful and illuſtrious poſſeſſors; yet it highly behoved the perſons eſpecially employed in the care of it well to beware and watch; leſt it was rendered not worth the wearing. How ineſtimable a jewel has lately dropped from it and at what an high price, with how many millions on millions of money and thouſands or ten thouſands of lives did we purchaſe the loſs of it? The dominion is gone beyond recovery; but the debt and the wound remain.

The late Mr. Hume and a noble Lord of the ſame northern part of our Iſland, one deeply ſkilled in political arithmetic have ſaid; that an abſolute monarchy will probably prove the euthanaſia of our conſtitution, the eaſy and gentle death or diſſolution of our

government. The writer highly honors the latter of theſe two authorities; but he nevertheleſs begs leave on this head to differ from them both. The extreme and immenſe magnitude of our debt ſo often mentioned will prevent a change or revolution of that kind from obtaining by any peaceable, orderly and quiet means or tranſition. What would in ſuch a caſe become both of our commerce and property? Our Funds muſt inſtantly blow up with a confuſion hardly to be exceeded, but by the burſting of the globe. They were raiſed on the forms of a free ſtate; without which they cannot for a moment ſubſiſt. What could in ſuch a conjuncture then be the ſituation of the Prince for the time being? Muſt not the throne itſelf be ſhaken and diſturbed; although Heaven forbid, that it ſhould be overturned or endangered? This country

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ſeems ſo circumſtanced; that it is impoſſible to ſecure a part without preſerving the whole: Some means and meaſures muſt be adopted to ſave all or the higheſt, as well as the loweſt, the greateſt as well as the meaneſt will bid fair to feel the general ſhock and convulſion; with which we are otherwiſe threatened. Miniſters need not to be reminded; that they are by their ſtations engaged to guard the Crown from miſchance: The writer however has the rather thrown out theſe things on account of ſome perſons; who affect to call themſelves the friends of the ----; but who have hitherto appeared much more intent on their own private intereſt and advancement, than on the happineſs or proſperity of the Prince; the name of whom they preſume to employ and whoſe will they pretend to obey.

The writer has now nearly ended his courſe. He has made bold to offer for the conſideration of the Public the foregoing obſervations; which he wiſhes to meet the attention merited by them and no more; whatever that may be. If the preſent ſyſtem of taxation is truly calculated to promote in the end the common benefit and welfare of the Whole; every honeſt and prudent man muſt deſire it to proceed; but if it will on the contrary lead us in all appearance to poverty, beggary and ruin; if it will totally drive our money out of the kingdom and leave us with a moſt enormous debt, but deprived of all means to diſcharge either the principal or the intereſt of it; undoubtedly it is high time for us to ſtay our hands; before we are totally and irrecoverably undone: This is the united intereſt of landed, trading and monied men. If our country

try ſinks; we ſhall all go with it; but let that our general parent and ſupport be preſerved; when every individual Engliſhman may under Heaven live happily and comfortably; every body or ſociety of men among us proſper and flouriſh. Should theſe great and good ends require alſo a real repreſentation of the Commons in Parliament, an univerſal and voluntary militia of the nation and a free and unconfined commerce; yet are all theſe meaſures in themſelves moſt wiſe and ſalutary regulations of government; although no neceſſity urged or called for the introduction of them. The friendſhip and affection of Ireland and an eaſy and acceptable means of ſtrengthening our union with Scotland may likewiſe prevent in future ſuch another diſmemberment of the Britiſh Empire; as we now experience and lament. The writer has the rather

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embraced this opportunity of expreſſing his ſentiments from the public hopes entertained of the preſent Miniſter: The exigency is extreme and the objects lying before him of the laſt and utmoſt importance; nothing leſs than our utter ruin on one hand or total recovery on the other with no intermediate condition: It belongs to his capacity and integrity to diſtinguiſh and chuſe between them. The writer is on this occaſion alſo actuated by his duty to his Sovereign, as well as his concern for the community: The conjuncture of affairs ſeems to involve the fortune of the Prince with the fate of his People. It is on the whole therefore the earneſt hope and prayer of the writer; that the united wiſdom of the nation, the adminiſtration and the legiſlature may concur in approving, adopting and purſuing ſuch meaſures; as will beſt provide

for

for all our public circumſtances and moſt ſurely and effectually ſecure the peace, happineſs and proſperity of our country.

Jan. 1786.

FINIS.

for all our public enjoyments and most surely and effectually secure the peace, happiness and prosperity of our country.

Jan. 1796.

FINIS.